

GIFT-GIVING BEHAVIOR: A CLOSER ANALYSIS OF EXCHANGE
PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS AND THE PERCEIVED
IMPORTANCE OF THE GIFT OCCASION

By

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GIFT-GIVING BEHAVIOR: A CLOSER ANALYSIS OF EXCHANGE
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Past research has examined the effect of purchase context (e.g., buying a gift for someone versus a purchase for personal use) and various gift-giving dimensions (e.g., gift for Christmas versus birthday) on differences in amount of information search, existence of a price range, and applicability of various product qualities. Unfortunately, many of these studies have reported conflicting findings. The author suggests that by further differentiating purchase context and by controlling for or measuring each of the gift-giving dimensions, many of these inconsistencies may be resolved. Specifically, the author posits that in order to better understand gift-giving behavior, the inclusion of personal use as a purchase context should be separated into at least two categories: purchasing a gift for self versus purchasing a product for self that is not considered a gift.

In addition, she states that the further distinction between types of donor/recipient relationships and gift occasions will advance the understanding of gift-giving behavior as well.

This study used a survey which asked respondents questions about a previous purchase decision they had made involving either a gift for a close other, a gift for a distant other, a gift for self, or a purchase for self acquired strictly out of need. The survey contained specific questions concerning the donor, the purchased product, the purchase occasion, the amount of information search individuals engaged in before purchasing the product, and the existence of a price range.

The results of this study show that the further differentiation of the personal use context and the donor/recipient relationship influences the amount of information search individuals engage in before purchasing a product, the existence of a price range before beginning their information search, and the types of product qualities sought in that search. The most significant differences were found for individuals buying for self strictly out of need as compared to the gift-giving contexts. Additional differences were reported for several comparisons between the three gift-giving contexts. Alternative explanations of the results are offered and implications for gift-giving research are discussed.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Gift giving has been said by many to be an intriguing, ubiquitous behavior which has been inadequately explored by consumer researchers (e.g., Banks, 1979; Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983). And yet it has been conservatively estimated that gifts account for 10% of retail sales in North America (Belshaw, 1965, p. 50). A large portion of past research on gift giving has attempted to either provide descriptive information on the phenomenon of gift giving or to distinguish gift giving from other types of consumer behavior, such as purchase for personal use. Unfortunately, some of this research has provided inconsistent findings concerning gift giving behavior. Specifically, mixed results have been reported by separate studies examining the differences in expenditures of time and/or money for individuals buying a gift for someone versus for individuals buying an item for personal use (Clarke & Belk, 1979; Gronhaug, 1972; Heeler, Francis, Okechuku, & Reid, 1979; Ryans, 1977; Scammon, Shaw, & Bamossy, 1982; Shapiro, 1970; Vincent & Zikmund, 1976). In addition, little research has been performed to examine the gift-giving process or the motivations underlying the actual exchange of gift objects

(Lutz, 1979; Sherry, 1983). Thus, research is much needed to help resolve these inconsistencies and further the knowledge of consumer gift-giving practices.

A model of the gift exchange process has been attempted by both Banks (1979) and Sherry (1983). Banks (1979) developed an interactive paradigm of gift giving which describes the behavior of both donor and recipient through a four-stage process, including purchase, interaction, consumption, and communication. While Sherry (1983) acknowledged Bank's important contribution in that she strived to provide a comprehensive picture of the gift-giving process, he proposed to improve upon Bank's model by developing a more articulate model that depicts the gift-giving process in three stages: gestation, prestation, and reformulation.

Both of these models incorporate the four dimensions of gift giving described by Belk (1979). Belk states that variations in the gift-giving process can occur dependent upon the dimensions involved: specifically, the donor, recipient, gift, and situational conditions. Donors can be individuals or groups of individuals (i.e., families or organizations). Recipients can be individuals or groups of individuals as well. Further, donors and recipients may be the same individual or group (Levy, 1982; Mick & DeMoss, 1990a; Schwartz, 1967; Sherry, 1983). Gifts can be products or services, whether purchased or handmade, or even blood or

body organs. Lastly, situational conditions depend upon such things as the gift-giving occasion and how and when the gift is presented.

The limited amount of past gift-giving research which has been done in marketing has typically measured or manipulated only two or three of the gift-giving dimensions in order to examine differences in the gift-exchange process such as variations in information search and gift selection. In order to understand the complexities of gift giving-behavior, researchers need to study each of the gift-giving dimensions as well as the differentiations along each dimension.

The purpose of this paper is to propose and discuss two factors which are believed to be able to resolve some of the inconsistencies in past gift-giving findings. These two factors concern two of the gift-giving dimensions and are referred to as the donor/recipient relationship and the nature of the occasion. A literature review of gift-giving research will be presented which will show that these two dimensions have not been sufficiently handled in past studies. It is believed that by further refinement and examination of these dimensions, a more comprehensive view of the gift-giving process may be attained.

In this chapter, a framework for the gift-giving dimensions which have not been adequately manipulated or controlled for in past gift-giving studies is briefly

discussed. In the second chapter, a literature review of relevant past gift-giving research is presented. Using the framework discussed in Chapter 1, each study is evaluated upon its consideration of each of the gift-giving dimensions. Based upon this discussion, several reasons are postulated to explain why some of the past inconsistencies in gift-giving findings may exist. Next, each of the dimensions or aspects of the dimensions which have been inadequately handled in past research will be analyzed through a detailed review of relevant literature. In the next two chapters, several hypotheses will be proposed based upon the previous review of the relevant literature along with a research design to examine these hypotheses. The last two chapters will present the study's results and conclusions as well as suggestions concerning future research ideas.

Framework

Gift giving is a fascinating, universal behavior that exists in several variations depending upon the donor and recipient, the gift, and the situational conditions involved. In order to understand the variations in gift-giving behavior, each of these dimensions or components of gift giving must be taken into account. Yet, past research has failed to recognize certain aspects or entire dimensions of gift behavior. Generally, these dimensions involve the

donor/recipient relationship and/or the situational condition.

Donor/Recipient Relationship

One way that past studies have examined gift-giving behavior has been to view gift giving as one type of purchase situation and contrasted it with another type of purchase situation, namely, personal use. Typically, these studies will specify in the gift-giving situation who the gift will be given to, and sometimes, they will also specify the precipitating condition. In the personal use scenario, individuals are simply told they are acquiring the item for personal use.

For these particular studies, this type of experimental design presents a problem. As stated earlier, a donor and a recipient may be the same individual. Several researchers have suggested this possibility (Levy, 1982; Schwartz, 1967; Sherry, 1983), and past research has provided evidence of this phenomenon (Mick & DeMoss, 1990a, 1990b). In fact, giving gifts to oneself or acquiring self-gifts appears to be a fairly common behavior, at least for Americans. Although self-gifts will be discussed in depth in a later section, I will briefly define self-gifts as symbolic self-communication which are considered special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and context bound (Mick & DeMoss, 1990b).

Because these studies did not recognize the fact that individuals may give gifts to themselves, they may have introduced a confound in their design. There is no way of knowing whether individuals in the personal use situation thought of the purchase as a gift to themselves or not. Although the goal of these studies was to contrast two different purchase situations, they could have potentially analyzed the difference between a gift-giving situation and a mixture of self-gift-giving and nongift-giving situations. Future research needs to make the distinction not only between buying a gift for someone and buying an item for personal use but also between buying a self-gift and buying a nonself-gift (see Figure 1).

Past research has also focused on different versions of dyadic gift giving behavior. Typically, these studies have manipulated the gift occasion or the recipient in order to examine differences in gift purchase strategies. In these studies, the donor/recipient relationship plays an important part in individuals' gift-giving strategies but is not always recognized as doing so. Specifically, the recipient in a dyadic gift-giving situation may be considered a distant relative or friend or he/she may be considered a close relative or friend by the donor. However, many studies do not specify or measure the particular donor/recipient relationship involved in the gift-giving situation.

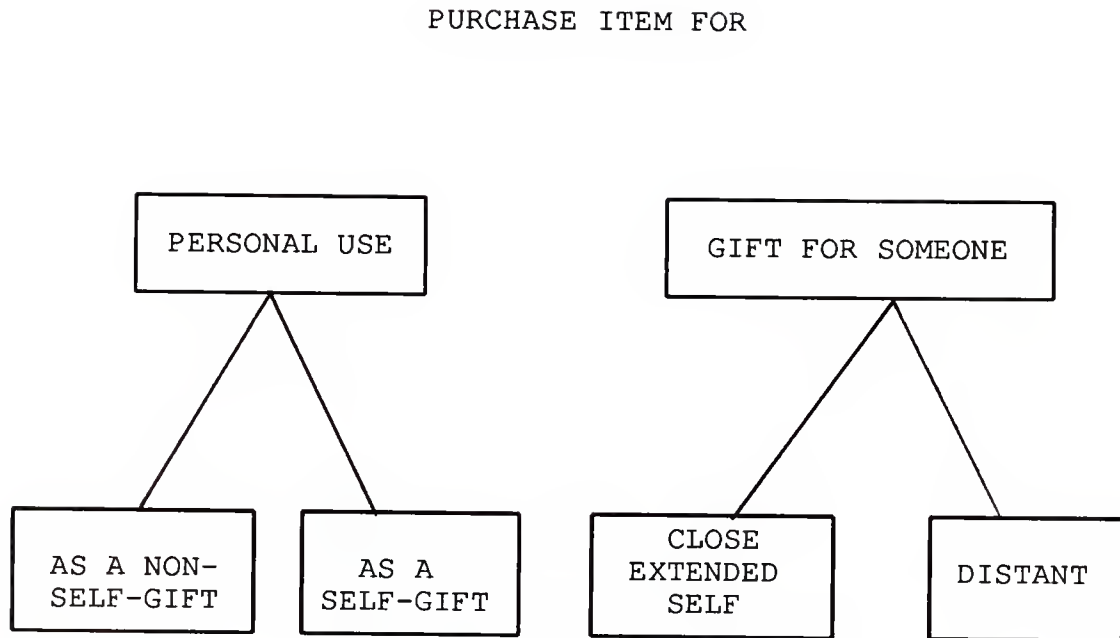


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the role of the recipient in gift giving.

It is believed that individuals buying gifts for close others or others who are incorporated into what Belk (1986) defines as one's extended self may exhibit significantly different purchase behaviors than those individuals buying gifts for distant others. Specifically, giving gifts to individuals in one's extended self may be seen as similar to giving gifts to oneself, whereas giving gifts to distant others may be seen as dissimilar to giving gifts to oneself (please note that these effects will be discussed more thoroughly in a later section). Only a few of the dyadic gift-giving studies have investigated the effects of the donor/recipient relationship on gift-giving behavior, and each one has suggested evidence of such effects (Goodwin, Smith, & Spiggle, 1990; Heeler, Francis, Okechuku, & Reid, 1979; Ryans, 1977). Future gift-giving research needs to make the distinction between a donor buying a self-gift, a gift to a close other, and a gift to a distant other (see Figure 1).

Situational Condition

Last, the nature of the situation has been a gift-giving component which has not always been measured or manipulated properly in past gift-giving studies. In some studies, the situational condition (e.g., specifically the gift occasion) is not specified at all, and in other studies, some aspect of the situation may be specified in one condition but not in another condition of the

experiment. To measure differences in gift giving behavior adequately, the situational condition such as the gift occasion has to be either manipulated or controlled for by the researcher. Past studies have shown that the type of occasion does have an effect on the amount of money an individual will spend on a gift and the type of gift an individual will purchase (Belk, 1979; DeVere, Scott, & Shulby, 1975). Future research needs to take into account the effect that different aspects of the situation have on the donor's purchase strategy and behavior.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following discussion will be divided into three basic sections. The first section will review relevant gift-giving literature focusing on gift context studies and studies examining gift giving as a purchase variable. The following two sections will review literature pertaining to the two gift-giving dimensions discussed earlier, namely, the role of the recipient and the situational condition. These two sections are included in order to examine their important role in understanding the complexities of gift-giving behavior.

Gift-Giving Studies

Gift Giving as a Purchase Variable

Typically, past research which has attempted to distinguish gift giving from other types of consumer behavior has presented individuals with scenarios specifying the product and the recipient of the purchased product (i.e., self versus other). In some instances, the occasion for giving a product to another and/or the relationship of the recipient to the donor is described or measured as well. The vast majority of these studies examined differences in search behavior, perceived financial or social risk, and

product selection within a specific purchase situation (i.e., personal use versus gift). The results of these studies have provided inconsistent findings concerning differences between gift-giving behavior and consumption behavior for personal use. Specifically, some studies have found that when a product is to be presented as a gift it entails a greater expenditure of effort and/or money than when the same product is to be used by the buyer (Clarke & Belk, 1979; Gronhaug, 1972; Sharpiro 1970). However, other studies have reported findings which contradict this conclusion (Heeler et al., 1979; Ryans, 1977; Scammon et al., 1982).

Gronhaug (1972) asked housewives about their most recent purchase of tableware and examined how buying purpose and prior experience affected information search. The results of his study provided evidence suggesting that individuals who bought tableware as a gift considered different types of tableware, studied brochures, and sought advice from friends and dealers more so than individuals who bought tableware for their own use. Individuals buying tableware for personal use with no previous experience studied price more so than individuals buying tableware as a gift. With previous experience, there was no difference in price comparisons. In addition, there was no difference in the number of individuals with no previous experience who visited more than one shop before buying their tableware.

However, with previous experience, the number of individuals who visited more than one shop before buying tableware was much higher than for those buying it as a gift versus for personal use.

Although Gronhaug's results suggest that individuals will seek out more information when shopping for a gift for someone versus when shopping for a personal use item, it can not be considered very strong evidence of this occurrence. First, by forcing respondents to select between only two reasons for their tableware purchase (i.e., bought as a gift for someone and for personal use), it is impossible to discern if the tableware purchased for personal use was considered a self-gift or simply needed as a replacement, for example. For those who bought tableware as gifts, one does not know whether the gift-giving relationship was close or distant or what the gift-giving occasion was (e.g., wedding, housewarming). Thus, it is difficult to conclude exactly what effects were being measured in this study.

A study by Clarke and Belk (1979) assessed the effects of product involvement and task involvement on anticipated consumer purchase effort. They hypothesized that greater product and task involvement, which are two determinants of purchase importance, should cause consumers to expend more effort. In their study, they manipulated product involvement by selecting products low (bubble bath and a blanket) and high (a record album and a pair of jeans) in

involvement. Task involvement was manipulated by informing subjects that the product was to be purchased for personal use (low task involvement) or as a gift for a good friend (high task involvement). Subjects were randomly assigned to two treatment conditions with each subject receiving both task conditions but different products. Purchase effort was estimated by six measures assessing the real and relative amount of money, time, and stores visited for each scenario.

The results of their study suggest that for low involvement products, subjects were willing to spend more time and money and visit more stores when buying the product as a gift than for personal use. In contrast, for high involvement products, subjects reported equal amounts of time, effort, and stores visited for the two levels of task involvement. Clarke and Belk explain this later finding as a ceiling effect on overall involvement. They state that for the selection of a product like jeans, involvement is already as high as it would normally reach, and the gift condition could raise this level no higher.

Based upon their results, Clarke and Belk (1979) suggested that the overall effect of task involvement was to increase the amount of anticipated effort for the low involvement products but not for the high involvement products. However, neither manipulation was checked within the study, so while systematic differences were observed in the dependent variables across the two conditions, it is

hard to conclude what exactly was being manipulated. There is no way of knowing if subjects in the personal use condition could have been anticipating purchase effort needed to acquire a gift for self or purchase effort needed to acquire a nonself-gift. In addition, since they did not specify either the recipient or the gift occasion, these factors were left free to vary across subjects. Therefore, the study's results cannot be generalized across recipients or gift occasions.

One possible interpretation of the results could be that subjects in the high product involvement condition may have viewed a record album and a pair of jeans as more likely to be products bought as gifts to self, and, thus, they anticipated expending a similar amount of search effort for both the personal use and gift conditions. Lastly, one wonders how realistic a task it was for college students to imagine giving gifts such as blankets and bubble gum. Given this is an uncommon occurrence among college students, other motives besides gift giving may have been operating in the high task/low product involvement condition.

Vincent and Zikmund (1976) conducted an exploratory study to determine the effects of different buying situations on several dimensions of perceived risk. They manipulated the buying situation by asking respondents to consider the purchase of an electric knife for home use or to give as a wedding present to a close friend. Following

each buying situation were eight questions concerning four different risk producing dimensions (i.e., performance, social, physical, and financial). Two types of risk measures were required for each type of risk. The respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale their impressions of the likelihood of occurrence and how important it would be to avoid the consequences associated with each of the four risk producing dimensions, within the given situation context.

Vincent and Zikmund conclude that significantly less social risk is involved in considering the purchase of an electric knife for home usage than in considering the same product as a wedding gift (i.e., the likelihood that others would think less of you if your were to buy this product and the importance of the consequences associated with this occurrence). However, respondents were significantly more concerned with the financial risk involved in purchasing an electric knife for home usage than in purchasing the same product as a wedding gift (i.e., the likelihood that this product costs too much and the importance of the consequences associated with this occurrence). Vincent and Zikmund suggest that by buying a more expensive model for a wedding present than they would have considered for themselves, this behavior could be interpreted as a risk reduction method subjects used for handling perceived social risk. Lastly, they found no significant differences between

the two purchase situations for physical and performance risk.

As with Clarke and Belk's study, no manipulation checks were performed to determine if subjects did respond to the questions as if they were buying the product for personal use or as a gift for a close friend's wedding. Although they reported systematic differences across the two conditions, it is hard to define exactly what is causing these effects. Given that the respondents were housewives, it is possible that they considered the electric knife as a gift to themselves over and above just buying it for personal use. In addition, the study involves only one product category, one type of recipient, and one occasion which leaves little to generalize about the observed results over gift occasions, gift recipients, and products.

Shapiro (1970) asked over 600 respondents who took part in a shopping experiment to evaluate actual items in five product categories (stockings, cologne, carpeting, sweater, and reclining chair) on a variety of attributes such as quality, worth the money, likelihood of purchase for personal use, and likelihood of purchase for gift giving. Shapiro found that although the differences were not large, in every case, the quality variable had a larger correlation and in all but one case; the price attitude had a smaller correlation when the likelihood of purchase was high for gift giving versus for personal use. Thus, he concluded

that respondents buying the product as a gift viewed the quality of the product as more important and the price as less important than when buying the product for personal use.

Although Shapiro (1970) did not describe his measures in enough detail to understand them fully, it appears that the measures were all single-item scales which leaves serious questions regarding their reliability. In addition, it cannot be determined if respondents interpreted personal use as a gift to oneself or not. The differences between purchase situations may have been greater had the definition of personal use been explicitly specified. Neither the recipient nor the type of gift occasion was specified either leaving these factors to vary freely across subjects.

Ryans (1977) found that individuals shopping for personal use took significantly more time to make their purchases than individuals shopping for outhome gifts (giver and recipient are members of different households). However, he found no significant differences between personal use buyers and inhome gift buyers (giver and recipient are members of the same household) for amount of purchase time. He questioned respondents about their most recent purchase of a small appliance and asked them to specify whether this purchase was for personal use, an inhome gift, or an outhome gift. He also discovered that outhome gift purchasers were more likely to set a price

before beginning the search process as compared to inhome gift and personal use purchasers. Ryans reported no significant differences between inhome gift purchasers and personal use purchasers.

As with the each of the previous studies discussed, Ryans (1977) does not make the distinction between buying an item for oneself as a gift versus a nongift. Thus, it cannot be determined what motives subjects in the personal use context were assuming. In addition, the nature of the occasion was not specified so that this was also allowed to vary across subjects. However, Ryans did examine the role of the recipient in the gift-giving situation and found some interesting results. If one assumes that recipients of inhome gifts were considered a part of the donor's extended self, then Ryans' results suggest the possibility that individuals purchasing gifts for close others may exhibit some of the same purchase behaviors as individuals purchasing gifts for oneself. Her results also suggest that individuals purchasing gifts for distant others may differ on certain purchase behaviors when compared to individuals purchasing gifts for close others or for self.

In conflict with both Gronhaug (1972) and Clarke and Belk (1979), Heeler, Francis, Okechuku, and Reid (1979) found that when buying a gift for a "friend's wedding," less information was accessed and less time was spent in making the gift buying decision than in making the personal use

buying decision. However, Heeler et al. also examined differences in shopping behavior when the gift was for a close friend versus for personal use and found no difference in the amount of information accessed or time spent in making the purchase decision. They measured amount of information search by an information display board (IDB) on which the attributes of the product class under study are displayed down the left-hand column and the brands are displayed across the top so that information on the brands is provided in matrix form. Different products were used in the wedding/personal use and the close friend/personal use contrasts: a blender and a watch, respectively. Each subject was assigned to one of four groups and was told to access as much or as little information as necessary to choose a brand. Heeler et al. also reported price as the most accessed attribute for individuals selecting a blender for their own use in comparison to brand name being the most accessed attribute for individuals deciding on a gift for a friend's wedding. However, the most frequently accessed attributes for individuals buying a watch for personal use were the same as for individuals buying a watch for a close friend. These attributes were brand name, price, and watch design.

The rationale of Heeler et al. for employing the wedding gift occasion was that this condition would constitute a "distant" gift-giving situation. However,

neither this manipulation nor the manipulation of a "close" gift-giving situation were checked to determine if subjects responded as such. It is hard to understand their rationale for using an occasion to manipulate a "distant" gift situation without a recipient specified and using a recipient to manipulate a "close" gift situation without an occasion specified.

Since personal use was not defined explicitly to subjects as a self-gift or nonself-gift, one possible interpretation may be that college students anticipating the purchase of a blender were more likely to view the purchase as a nongift item, whereas students anticipating the purchase of a watch were more likely to interpret the watch as a self-gift. Thus, similarities in search behavior appear between conditions for the purchase of the watch, whereas differences appear between conditions for the purchase of the blender.

Although it would be convenient to be able to state that the results of Heeler et al. provide support for the idea that self-gifts and gifts to close others share more similar purchase characteristics than gifts to distant others, they used only one product category and one occasion for each comparison. It cannot be determined whether the results may have occurred for other product categories or occasions or if the product categories and the occasion used

have even been considered in past gift situations by the sample employed.

In addition, it is questionable to assume that the IDB is an accurate measure of how individuals would search for information in a real shopping environment. Given that time and effort have to be expended in the real world when searching for information, one feels uneasy about drawing conclusions about search behavior when it is measured by how many attributes are turned over and read on an information board.

Last, Scammon, Shaw, and Bamossy (1982) analyzed reasons for purchasing flowers by grouping them into personal uses, obligatory events, and gift occasions. They defined obligatory events as functioning both as a form of communicating feelings for the recipient and as a method of fair social/economic exchange. Examples of occasions grouped into obligatory events are "for a patient in the hospital," "for a wedding," or "for a funeral." Gift occasions were defined primarily as a means of communication either to the recipient or about the donor in which the notion of fair exchange had only a minimal role. Gifts for "an anniversary" or "a birthday" are examples of gift occasions. Lastly, examples of personal use occasions are "just because," and "personal home or office use."

Questionnaires were administered which asked subjects about their past and intended future purchases of flowers.

Subjects also responded to questions about their attitudes toward flower purchases in general as well as providing demographic and socioeconomic data. Scammon et al. performed a discriminant analysis of purchaser characteristics and purchasing behaviors to identify differences between the three groups.

The results of their analysis indicated significant differences between groups. Scammon et al. report that the data clearly identify individuals who buy flowers for personal use by their positive attitudes toward flowers and by their future buying intentions. Personal use individuals exhibited a greater likelihood of purchasing flowers for not only personal use but for future obligatory events and gift occasions as well. In addition, they paid the most for flowers, were most likely to include flowers as part of their normal budget, and to buy flowers "just on impulse" (as opposed to planning purchases for special occasions). These respondents tended to come from younger, professional/executive families.

Flower purchases made for obligatory events were made simply, most often being charged, ordered by phone, and store delivered. Individuals in this group intended only to buy flowers in the future for other obligatory events. They were predominately female and were comprised of the oldest respondents.

For those individuals buying flowers for gift occasions, they were least likely to buy flowers for personal use or obligatory events. This group was most likely to plan their flower purchases for special occasions and, generally, to pay in cash and deliver their gift in person. They also were more likely to pay the least for their flower purchases. Individuals grouped into gift occasions were the youngest of the respondents and were likely to be students or housewives.

There exist several points of contention in the study by Scammon et al. One of these points lies in the manner in which they define several concepts. One of these concepts is the obligatory/voluntary distinction. I do not believe that this distinction can be made by the occasion for which the gift is given as Scammon et al. have done. Rather, it is believed that a specific act of giving may be motivated by both obligatory and voluntary reasons.

Another point lies in the fact that Scammon et al. group individuals who bought flowers for personal home or office use, "just because," "other special day," and "other" into the personal use category. From this author's point of view, it seems possible that some of the individuals who purchased flowers for "other special day," "just because," or even "other" may have purchased these flowers as self-gifts. Frequently, individuals have reported buying self-gifts in order to reward themselves or just to be nice to

themselves (Mick & DeMoss, 1990a). These self-gift motivations could be considered as "special day" or "just because" occasions. In addition, Scammon et al. (1982) hypothesized that younger, professional people would have a more positive attitude towards flowers. They state that "these people enjoy purchasing for themselves as a reward or a 'pick up.'" They found that people who bought flowers for themselves were, in fact, younger, professional families with positive attitudes toward flowers and who bought flowers for a variety of occasions.

A last point deals with the measures taken in the study. Although the measures used were not described in detail, it seems that at least some, if not all, of them were single-item measures which leaves serious questions about their reliability.

From the above discussion and evaluation, it is impossible to try to resolve the inconsistencies between these studies' findings (Clarke & Belk, 1979; Gronhaug, 1972; Heeler et al., 1979; Ryans, 1977; Scammon et al., 1982; Shapiro, 1970; Vincent & Zikmund, 1976). Almost every study used different instructions in order to manipulate the purchase situations, as well as using different task environments and different dependent measures. There were also serious questions regarding most of the studies' internal and external validity. All of the studies failed to make clear distinctions between self-gifts and

nonself-gifts in the personal use situations and most of the studies failed to specify whether the recipient in the gift situation was a close or distant other. In addition, the nature of the occasion was rarely accounted for in most of the purchase situations.

Gift Context Studies

Gift context studies examine gift giving as the primary variable of interest. These studies have examined such areas of gift giving as gift selection, information search, and, in a few instances, motivation for gift purchase. However, there has not been extensive published research on gift giving within a marketing context. There have been several studies which have produced some interesting results.

Belk (1982) attempts to resolve the inconsistent findings in the literature concerning differences in the gift/personal use dichotomy. He states that while gift giving may be a more involving purchase situation as compared to personal use, research to date has been inconsistent in showing that products presented as gifts entail a greater expenditure of time and money than when the same product is to be used by the buyer. Belk hypothesized that the inconsistencies in the findings could be due to the fact that different gift-giving situations show considerably different levels of giver involvement and that these

differences in involvement directly influence the amount of effort devoted to purchase selection.

Belk (1982) manipulated involvement levels solely within gift-giving situations. He reasoned that for studies that have asked people to imagine choosing the same product as a gift for others or as a purchase for self, it may be highly artificial to ask someone to imagine giving a particular product such as bubble bath as a gift. Thus, subjects were randomly assigned to gift-giving scenarios differing in involvement and asked for their evaluation of characteristics of appropriate gifts rather than for a specific product.

The study contained four treatment conditions: (a) birthday gift for close female friend, (b) thank you gift to repay favor for a casual female friend, (c) birthday gift for a casual female friend who is older than you, and (d) wedding gift for a close young female relative. Conditions (a) and (d) represented high involvement gift-giving situations while conditions (b) and (c) represented low involvement gift-giving situations.

Subjects were asked to rate the desirability of 87 gift characteristics in which were embedded six characteristics of interest for the study. These six gift characteristics measured price, quality, and ease of purchase. Manipulations of involvement were checked by asking subjects, "Compared to other gifts you give, how special

should a gift to this person on this occasion be?" To add to the task's realism, subjects were asked to give a first name and age of someone they knew who fit the scenario description, yet they were asked not to think in terms of a particular prior gift to this person.

Belk hypothesized that desirable characteristics of gifts purchased for situations low in involvement would be lower priced, lower quality, and more easily purchased than gifts purchased for high involvement situations. The results indicated that responses in the two low involvement situations were most often similar, but responses to the high involvement situation were seldom similar. Two of the three ratings of price were highest for the two high involvement conditions. The third price rating was highest for the wedding scenario only. Both high involvement situations resulted in the highest ratings for "high quality." Lastly, the two ratings measuring ease of purchase indicated that it was undesirable for the wedding gift to be "quick and convenient" or a "spur-of-the-moment" purchase but that these characteristics were not undesirable in a birthday gift for a close friend.

Belk explained the inability of involvement to account for the variations in purchasing strategies between different situations by the expectations which may be attached to the specific gift giving occasions. While different recipients included in the scenarios were

apparently enough to balance the involvement levels, they may not have been enough to negate the normative expectations about appropriate wedding and birthday gift characteristics across situations.

In his study, Belk specifies both the nature of the occasion and the recipient in each scenario, yet he does not consider the effect the nature of the occasion has on gift selection until, as he notes, after he analyzes his results. In addition, it is not clear that the manipulation check measured the level of donors' involvement. One could imagine a high involvement gift occasion that may not be considered special by a donor such as a business dinner at one's boss's house. Subjects were also presented with a highly artificial task in which they rated the desirability of the six relevant dependent measures along with an enormous amount of other gift characteristics.

A study by DeVere, Clifford, and Shulby (1975) also attempted to assess the magnitude with which respondents sought or avoided various gift attributes under different gift-giving occasions. Birthdays and weddings were chosen as the gift-giving occasions to be varied in order to reduce the potential for variance induced by different social meanings that holidays such as Christmas and Mother's Day may be perceived to have. The gift attributes were generated by focus group members and by a literature search. DeVere et al. (1975) stated that these attributes represent

the evaluative criteria potentially used by consumers in their gift choice process and, thus, ultimately represented the psychological (perceived) situation.

Subjects were told to think of a specific person for whom they might purchase a gift in the near future. They were asked to supply the potential recipient's age, initials, and relationship to subjects to increase involvement on the part of the respondent. Each subject responded to 48 gift attributes and was assigned to only one condition.

The results of their study indicated that certain gift attributes are highly salient to the gift-giving decision regardless of the gift-giving occasion. Attributes highly sought by the respondents regardless of the experimental condition were receiver's need for the gift, the uniqueness, enjoyability, durability, performance, usefulness, and innovativeness of the gift. Gift attributes found to be highly avoided by respondents regardless of the occasion included lack of recipient's desire for the gift, unreliable, impersonal, and gaudy gifts, and gifts that lack brand status, function, and style.

DeVere et al. (1975) also found several attributes that were rated significantly different for the two occasions. Two of the gift attributes found to be sought out significantly more in the wedding condition than in the birthday condition were presence of government-sponsored

consumer tests and presence of warranty. DeVere et al. reported that these gift attributes are risk-reducing properties of a product which were employed by Roselius (1977) in his study of perceived risk. They stated that it was informally hypothesized that risk-reducing properties of a gift would be more salient to subjects in the wedding condition due to the reduced frequency of occurrence and the high social visibility associated with gift-giving behavior.

Five related gift attributes were found to be sought significantly more in the birthday condition than in the wedding condition. These gift attributes--innovativeness, imaginativeness, novelty, handmade, and spontaneity--were labeled as collative properties. DeVere et al. (1975) suggest that these attributes are similar to each other in that they imply arousal potential for the donor.

DeVere et al. state that the goal of their research was to assess consumer attitudes towards two gift-giving occasions, yet it seems they were assessing consumer attitudes towards gift attributes in two gift-giving occasions. If this assumption is true, then the type of recipient would also affect consumer attitudes toward gift selection. However, since respondents were asked to think of a specific person for whom they might purchase a gift in the near future, there is no way of knowing how the type of recipient affected the gift attribute ratings. Respondents were also presented with a highly artificial task with the

unlikely possibility that the person they had in mind would be given a gift for the occasion they were assigned to.

In a study of 219 gift-giving instances by 73 Philadelphia area residents, Belk (1979) provides some descriptive information on the process of gift selection. He found that the most frequent gift-giving occasions were birthdays and Christmas, and the recipients most often given gifts were friends, parents, and children, respectively. Several other findings were that only 19% of the respondents found gift giving an unpleasurable experience, approximately two-thirds of the respondents took less than one hour to shop for gifts, and cost of the gift was more clearly determined by the occasion rather than by the type of recipient (e.g., friend versus relative). The four most frequent occasions in which the gift cost \$10 or more were weddings, anniversaries, Christmas/Hanukkah, and graduations. Belk also examined gift characteristics by occasions and found that birthday gifts were uniquely personal and fun compared to Christmas and wedding gifts and were also judged to be lower quality, less expensive, less prestigious, and less lasting.

Belk conducted a final analysis comparing the similarities between the giver's perception of the characteristics possessed by the gift and the giver's actual and ideal self-concept and the giver's perception of the recipient. Belk discovered that the giver's ideal

self-concept was more highly correlated with the choice of the gift than was the giver's actual self-concept and perceptions of the recipient, although the later two were found to be significant factors.

In his analysis, Belk did not examine what effect the type of recipient might have had on the similarities between the givers' perception of the gift characteristics and their perceptions of their ideal self-concept, actual self-concept, and the recipient. There may be significant differences between the similarities of the giver's various perceptions when the recipient is incorporated into the giver's extended self as compared to when the recipient is a distant relation. Belk also took the average of correlations between the subjects' gift perception ratings and their perceptions of their actual self-concept, ideal self-concept, and the recipient for three different gift occasions. Therefore, the effect of the type of occasion could not be examined as well.

Looking at gift giving from a different perspective, Warshaw (1980) examined correlations of attitudinal and social normative variables with intentions to purchase gift items varying in price. Warshaw used Fishbein's behavioral intentions model which posits that

$$B = BI = A_{act} + SN,$$

where B is overt behavior, BI is behavioral intention, A_{act} is attitude toward performing the behavior, and SN is

subjective social norm. Perceptual expense of the product was manipulated by the type of product subjects rated on Aact, SN, and BI. From a pretest, Warshaw included in his study the two most frequently noted expensive gifts (a necklace and a sweater) and the two most frequently noted inexpensive gifts (a Valentine card and a box of chocolates). The study's findings suggested that evaluative attributes (e.g., "It is good for me to buy Product X for someone") rather than norms (e.g., "Others who are important to me think . . .") influenced intentions to purchase expensive gifts, while evaluative attitudes and norms were equally correlated with intentions to purchase inexpensive gifts.

Similar to previous studies, Warshaw allowed both the type of recipient and the gift occasion to vary freely across subjects. Thus, one cannot generalize the observed results over recipients or gift situations. However, the expensive gifts are more personal and may be appropriate only for special people under special circumstances. Perhaps, some subjects were not involved with the appropriate recipients. Similarly, expensive gifts may have been unaffordable for some of the subjects.

Few studies have examined consumers' motivations for giving gifts, a topic which had been virtually untouched by marketers and a task which Lutz (1979) has referred to as opening the "black box" (Wolfenbarger, 1990). Goodwin,

Smith, and Spiggle (1990) conducted a study proposing that the extent to which gift givers are motivated by primarily voluntary or obligatory motives shapes the gift selection, acquisition, and postpurchase process. Their definition of obligatory and voluntary gift giving differs from the definition of Scammon et al. (1982). Goodwin et al. (1990) state that voluntary motives encompass both the agonistic motive which is self-serving (the wife seeking to regain affection from an alienated husband) and the altruistic motive which is selfless (the father expressing esteem for his child). On the other hand, they identify the obligatory motive as encompassing both reciprocity and ritual. Reciprocity is represented as giving a gift as part of a mutual exchange (which does not have to be a tangible exchange) or in return for another gift. Goodwin et al. (1990) do not feel that the obligatory/voluntary distinction can be made by the occasion for which the gift is given. They state that a specific act of giving may have elements of ritual (Valentine's Day), reciprocity (I expect you to give me a Valentine's gift), and symbolic communication (I enjoy expressing my affection for you).

Subjects were asked to identify a recent gift-giving experience followed by a series of open-ended questions regarding why the gift was given, what the subjects intended to communicate, considerations which influenced search time, effort and price, and what, if anything, was expected in

return. Subjects were asked to respond to one of the two versions of the questionnaire. One version asked subjects to identify a gift experience "in which you felt obligated" and the other version asked subject to identify a gift experience "in which you felt no obligation to give a gift."

Goodwin et al. (1990) found several interesting insights concerning donors' motives and the gift-giving process. One of their findings suggested that recipients of voluntary gifts were mainly close friends and family, whereas recipients of obligatory gifts included casual friends as well. In addition, their results indicate that while gifts to casual friends were meant to communicate feelings, simply mark an event, or indicate "nothing" at all, gifts to close friends and family were almost all meant to communicate emotional states and relational qualities. Although both types of gift-giving exchanges were given to express relationship importance ("giver's sentiment") and giver's own feelings ("expression of giver's sentiment"), voluntary gifts were more likely to be given due to recipient's need/characteristic ("needed cheering up," "because he's a nice person"), and obligatory gifts were more likely to be given in celebration of an occasion. When selecting a gift, voluntary donors were more concerned with recipient's needs in contrast to obligatory donors who were more concerned with external definitions of appropriateness as well as relationship importance and what was expected in

return. In addition, two-thirds of obligatory and only one-third of voluntary donors felt time and money was not an issue when selecting their gift. Goodwin et al. suggest that since obligatory gifts may be given to less familiar recipients, more time and money may be required to select an appropriate gift. Lastly, when asked, "what did you expect in return," voluntary donors indicated only emotion and gratitude whereas obligatory donors expressed tangible gifts as well as gratitude in return for their gift. However, obligatory donors stated they would be more likely to resist reciprocity than voluntary donors.

The study by Goodwin et al. provides some initial insights into obligatory and voluntary motives involving gift-giving behavior. Since they argue that the obligatory/voluntary distinction cannot be made based on the type of gift occasion, it would have been useful to provide evidence of this argument by asking subjects to list the occasion for the gift experience they identified. In addition, dependent measures and coding procedures (Goodwin et al., 1990) were not described in enough detail to understand them fully. Therefore, it was impossible to assess their reliability or validity.

Wolfinbarger (1990) studied gift-giving motivations as well but instead focused more so on the symbolic aspects of the gift in relation to the giver's motivation. She conducted indepth interviews with 18 subjects (9 couples who

were married at least 25 years) and asked them to discuss their feelings about gift giving in general as well as a detailed story about their favorite gift from their spouse.

Wolfinbarger interpreted her findings through the framework of three different motivations for giving. She stated that the most dominate motivation spouses perceived when they received their favorite gift was the desire to show love (an altruistic motive). In addition, most of the favorite gifts often cost the giver much sacrifice either in money, effort, time, or thought that went into buying the gift. Two additional altruistic motives expressed by subjects' favorite gift stories included reparations of loss experienced by the receiver (not caused by the donor) and altruism of the receiver. Wolfinbarger reports that one spouse said that her favorite gift was a wedding ring her husband purchased after she had lost her first ring.

In her study, Wolfinbarger also asked subjects to consider the possibility of not giving gifts at Christmas to investigate the motivation of gift giving as a norm. She reported only 6% actually contemplated the notion along with expressing their feelings that relatives, children, and friends would feel forgotten and unappreciated. She went on to state that gift-giving norms are a way of marking relationships and life events concerning rites of passage. She illustrated this point through a favorite gift story in which the gift was a jewel which had been funded in part by

a volunteer organization in order to commemorate one respondent's term as head of an organization.

A third motivation which Wolfinbarger examined was self-interested giving. She concluded from her analysis that in relationships with relatives, givers are unlikely to have as a primary motive the creation of obligation, a conclusion which is supported by Goodwin et al's (1990) analysis of recipients of obligatory and voluntary gifts. She suggests that a study of "least favorite gifts" may be more enlightening in investigating the extent of self-interested giving.

In addition, Wolfinbarger analyzed the symbolism of subjects' favorite gifts in relation to whether the gift communicated aspects of the giver and/or recipient. She states that of all the gift's symbolic functions, the presentation of self (donor) and other (recipient) is the most obvious (Belk, 1979). She found evidence of both giver's self and giver's perception of the receiver in subjects' favorite gift stories. She related how one wife expressed "her inability to choose gifts her husband really liked, saying that she bought items she really wanted him to have, rather than gifts he really wanted." On the other hand, when asked why a particular gift was chosen for their spouse, Wolfinbarger relayed that many said quite simply, "It was him (or her)" and proceeded to list attributes of the gifts which they perceived characterized their spouse.

Lastly, she suggested that poor choices are often the result of a poor fit between the gift and the receiver. She mentioned one couple who each told her of an incident where the wife had received a frilly blouse from her husband that she did not like at all. When asked why she did not like the blouse, her husband replied, "I think it represented to her a woman she felt she wasn't."

Wolfinbarger's study provides an exploratory look into gift-giving motivations which are communicated throughout the symbolic aspects of the gift. She touches upon the idea that perceptions of the donor and the recipient may be reflected in the gift selection. Yet, in examining what she states is the three major motivations for gift giving, she focuses on the recipients' perceptions of the donors' motivation for giving. It is entirely possible that the recipients' perceptions of the donors' motives could be incorrect.

From the analysis and evaluation of these studies, it is evident that a thorough understanding of gift-giving behaviors has not been reached. In order to reach this understanding, the effects of the role of the recipient and the nature of the occasion must be considered. Each of these studies failed to account for such effects. In addition, most of them had serious conceptual and methodological flaws which leaves their findings questionable. Future research needs to be aware of these

concerns when conducting future gift-giving research. The next two sections address the conceptual areas of gift giving which have been neglected in past studies.

Donor/Recipient Relationship

Self-Gifts

One of the more important concepts which has not been considered in previous studies is the idea that an individual can be both the donor and the recipient of a gift. This concept, which has been identified as self-gifts (Mick & DeMoss, 1990a, 1990b), may have been a confound in past studies examining the differences between gift-giving and personal use purchase behavior. Just as dyadic gift giving is context bound (Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983) so is purchasing gifts for oneself (Mick & DeMoss, 1990a, 1990b). Since few of the studies specified both recipient and occasion, it is almost impossible to determine whether individuals were responding to the personal use scenarios as a purchase of a gift for self or not.

Although little empirical research has been done on this type of gift-giving behavior, several researchers have mentioned the idea of giving gifts to self (Levy, 1982; Mick, 1986; Schwartz, 1967; Sherry, 1983). Schwartz (1967) noted the important role the self-concept plays in gift giving and discussed a gift's effect on the identity of the giver as well as the receiver. He spoke of self-gifts in terms of "self-indulgence" and called individuals who

engaged in such activities "self-gratifiers." He felt that those who tended to self-indulge were a result of a non-intimate community where they were without affectional bonds. Schwartz stated that these people created their own emotional "nutrition" to survive by supplying their own material demonstrations of recognition in order to develop a source of pleasure (through self).

In a review of Scammon et al.'s (1982) paper, Levy mentions considering the possibility of flowers as gifts to oneself as a way of providing a deeper understanding of gift giving and the symbolism of flowers. He suggests that buying oneself flowers as gifts may be a form of self-communication saying--"'I owe it to myself.' I as subject reward me as object" (1982, p. 542).

Sherry and McGrath (1989) found some of the first empirical evidence of gift giving to oneself. They performed an ethnography of gift stores and conducted interviews with gift store customers. One woman told interviewers that an expensive piece of jewelry was "a present from me to me," while another said about a doll she was considering purchasing, "I've decided that nobody is worthy of this but me. I'm giving it to myself."

Mick and DeMoss (1990a) examined what they term self-gifts directly through an exploratory study using open-ended survey questions. The study's emphasis was on the occasions and consumer motivations of self-gifts. A critical incident

technique was used requesting respondents to recall the last time they had acquired a gift for themselves. Specifically, subjects were asked to describe the situation that led to the self-gift purchase and any additional circumstances and motivations for their own self-gift behavior in which they had engaged.

A content analysis of the circumstances and motivations was performed. The dominant self-gift circumstances identified in the study are times of accomplishment, when feeling down, when a holiday arrives, when feeling stressed, when there is extra money to spend, and when the item may be especially needed. The most frequent motivations cited were to reward, to be nice to oneself, to cheer up, to fulfill a need, to celebrate, and to relieve stress. Given that over 90% of the circumstances and motivations that were reported by subjects fell into one of these categories, Mick and DeMoss concluded that self-gifts appeared to be acquired within a relatively confined set of circumstances and motivations. They determined that self-gifts can be partly differentiated from other personal acquisitions by these circumstances and motivations. However, while some respondents mentioned need as a motivation for acquiring a self-gift, others openly stated that self-gifts are non-essential. Mick and DeMoss concluded that self-gifts at times may be needed, but need motivation is not a sufficient condition for a personal acquisition to be a self-gift.

The analysis of the stories also revealed self-gifts to be characterized as variable and flexible in nature as opposed to being constrained by the self-gift occasion. Many different types of products and services were acquired as self-gifts for each of the circumstances and motivations, and some self-gifts were found in multiple circumstances and motivations.

Lastly, Mick and DeMoss (1990a) state that the self-gift stories revealed a definite role of the self-concept in self-gift behavior. Specifically, the stories suggest the complimentary relationship between the individual's sense of worth and self-esteem and his/her self-gift behavior as can be seen in a quote from one of their subjects, "A self-gift tells that I'm worthy person and I should be appreciated."

In the second of their studies on self-gifts, Mick and DeMoss (1990b) undertook a more extensive look at self-gifts. Based on their earlier study which identified some of the major motivations and circumstances, they continued their analysis of self-gifts by examining detailed stories of self-gift experiences in four contexts. Respondents were asked to recall and describe in detail the last time they acquired a product, service, or experience for themselves in two of four possible contexts. The possible contexts were "as a reward for having accomplished a personal goal," "to cheer yourself up because you were feeling down," "for your birthday," and "when you had extra money to spend."

Mick and DeMoss (1990b) performed a content and interpretive analysis of the stories and discovered six underlying self-gift themes which were present in the self-gift stories: perfect thing, deserving, discovery, identity, self-esteem, and escape. The theme of perfect thing is described as the ability of self-gifts to maximize consumption satisfaction or pleasure due to the fact that the giver and receiver share perfect knowledge about the receiver's needs and wants. The deserving theme revealed the individual's strong belief that he/she had earned the self-gift. Mick and DeMoss found in their analysis that individuals who held a certain fantasy or felt a bit of mystery in their lives tended to indicate a theme of discovery in their self-gift stories. Both identity and self-esteem themes revealed the tactical self-influence of self-gifts on the self by maintaining or directing one's self-definition and self-worth. Lastly, the theme of escape showed self-gifts' effect on mood stated by way of their ability to alter one's mood or mindset as a type of coping strategy to deal with life's ups and downs. Their analysis indicated the existence of these themes across all four contexts with some themes displaying greater dominance in some contexts than others. Mick and DeMoss (1990b) also reported that on average across the four contexts, 83% of the time respondents said that they thought the acquisition

which they described for a particular context was a self-gift before they actually acquired it.

In Mick and DeMoss's conclusion, they offer a definition of self-gift based on prior writings and empirical work of self-gift behavior. They define self-gifts as "(1) personally symbolic self-communication through (2) special indulgences that tend to be (3) premeditated and (4) highly context bound" (1990b, p. 328). Element one stresses the fact that an integral feature of the meanings of self-gifts is their arbitrary, person-specific connotations. To some degree all self-gifts serve as symbolic communication primarily with oneself conveying messages concerning either affective self-regard and/or self-definition.

Element two stresses the specialness of a gift to oneself. Self-gifts are special acquisitions for they provide extra meaning for the individual and/or they are out-of-the-ordinary acquisitions. Mick and DeMoss state that self-gifts are among the least likely of self-directed purchases to be low involvement, routine consumer behaviors. However, since private psychological processes are employed by individuals in determining what self-acquisitions will be considered gifts to self, any product or service can be transformed into a self-gift.

The third element in the definition is concerned with the idea that self-gifts are premeditated or bought

intentionally. Individuals who buy self-gifts are aware in some sense that the acquisition is obtained as a gift for self before they acquire it. It may not be that the term "self-gift" comes to mind, but self-gift purchases will bring about thoughts of specialness and personal symbolism. Lastly, self-gifts are highly context bound. Just as in dyadic gift giving, the giving of gifts to self is, in part, determined by the surrounding circumstances. For example, the perfume bought as a replacement can be converted from nonself-gift to self-gift when the basis for buying it is replaced by such settings as rewarding an accomplishment or celebrating a birthday.

In a third study of self-gifts, Mick and DeMoss (1992a) examined product differences between two self-gift contexts and the relationship between several socioeconomic variables and the propensity to engage in self-gift behavior. The study was divided into two sections with each section employing a survey. In the first survey, subjects were asked to relate a product, service, or experience that they had acquired for one of two conditions: to cheer themselves up because they were feeling down or to reward themselves for having accomplished a personal goal. In addition, all subjects were asked to rate a series of adjectives regarding the qualities of self-gifts that they perceived to be most applicable to each of four self-gift contexts: reward, therapy, birthday, and extra money to spend.

From the results of the first study, Mick and DeMoss (1992a) discovered that certain products seemed to be more generally acquired self-gifts overall, while some were significantly more likely to be acquired in specific contexts. The most frequently cited self-gifts were clothing, fast-food, nonfast-food restaurants, music, personal care services, recreational products, and electronic equipment. Comparing the reward context to the cheer up context, reward self-gifts were more likely to be clothing, nonfast-food restaurants, recreational products, and travel and less likely to be music, fast-food, personal care services, and entertainment outside the home.

In addition, Mick and DeMoss (1992a) reported in their first study that certain product qualities were shared among the self-gift contexts while some qualities varied among the contexts. Specifically, they found that the four self-gift contexts shared the product qualities of exciting, fun, and satisfying. They stated that this finding provides further evidence of the individual's perceived indulgence and specialness of self-gifts. However, they also reported several qualities that varied across the four contexts. Compared to the other three contexts, individuals rated reward self-gifts as more inspiring, memorable, and lasting and less unusual and silly. The qualities that individuals rated as more applicable to therapeutic self-gifts were inspiring and relaxing. In contrast, practical,

prestigious, memorable, elegant, perfect, irresistible, or lasting were seen as less applicable to therapeutic self-gifts compared to the other contexts. Birthday self-gifts were perceived to be more memorable, fashionable, thoughtful, perfect, and lasting and less likely to be inexpensive or relaxing. Last, by comparison, the qualities of inexpensive, practical, and irresistible were viewed as more applicable to the extra money context, whereas inspiring, memorable, magical, and warm were considered less applicable to this context.

The second study employed a telephone survey concerning which types of consumers were more inclined to engage in varied self-gift behaviors. Specifically, respondents were asked how often they acquired products, services, or experiences for themselves in eight different contexts being to reward, to cheer up, to relieve stress, to celebrate a holiday, to provide an incentive for reaching a personal goal, to be nice to yourself, to celebrate your birthday, and because you had extra money to spend. The survey also measured several socioeconomic variables which were believed to be related to the propensity to engage in self-gift behaviors.

The results of Mick and DeMoss's (1992a) second survey indicated that the likelihood of engaging in self-gift behavior is correlated with several socioeconomic variables. Specifically, they found that age was negatively associated

with each self-gift propensity. Thus, older individuals were less inclined to engage in self-gift behavior. Current financial condition was positively related to every self-gift propensity. That is, individuals who perceived themselves to be better off financially were more inclined to engage in self-gift behavior within each of the given contexts. Mick and DeMoss also found that females were more likely to acquire self-gifts in cheer-up and nice-to-self contexts, whereas males were more likely to acquire self-gifts as incentives to reaching a personal goal.

In sum, the results from Mick and DeMoss's (1992a) two surveys provide further evidence of self-gift behaviors. They tell us which self-gifts are preferred overall and, between the two prevalent self-gift contexts, which qualities are applicable to self-gifts in four of the major contexts and which types of consumers more likely to exhibit different self-gift behaviors. In addition, the overall results support the belief that using personal use to describe a purchase context can result in several different interpretations by individuals.

In conclusion, past research concerning gift-giving behavior has only recently begun to examine the idea of giving gifts to oneself (e.g., Mick & DeMoss, 1990a, 1990b, 1992a; Mick, DeMoss, & Faber, 1992b; Sherry & McGrath, 1989). Several of the past gift-giving studies reviewed previously have focused on variations in gift-giving

practices arising from relationship differences between the recipient and donor (Belk, 1982; Goodwin et al., 1990; Ryans, 1977). By considering that people do give gifts to themselves as a possible donor/recipient relationship, the complexities of gift-giving behavior may be examined more fully. Specifically, if one looks at gift-giving behaviors between individuals in a close relationship and self-gift behaviors, there may be some important similarities and differences revealed between these two donor/recipient relationships. Similarly, examining gift giving to oneself as compared to gift giving to distant others should reveal some interesting differences in individual's behaviors.

Extended Self

The basis of the above argument comes from the concept of the extended self (Belk, 1988). Belk states that the sense of self, in part, comes from, intentionally or unintentionally, the possessions one perceives as owning. He argues that the self-concept is fragile and in need of support and that this support is achieved through what one has and possesses. Belk states that possessions can be such things as goods, whether handmade or bought, body parts (e.g., heart, hands), friends and family, landmarks, places, or public monuments. If one views friends and family as extensions of self, then giving to others in which one has a close relationship may have many similarities to giving to oneself.

Belk (1988) provides evidence of other people being viewed as extensions of self and explains the way in which they are incorporated into the self-concept. In his discussion of other people as a part of the extended self, Belk states, "Clearly, our laws allow us to regard our children, biological or adopted, as possessions" (1988, p. 156). There are examples of this concerning abortion, divorce proceedings, and invitro fertilization. Children and grandchildren are seen as ways of extending mortality of ourself. People also report experiencing a sense of self-loss when they become separated from another due to divorce or death of a loved one.

Belk (1987) conducted an empirical study examining the extended self. He asked subjects to perform a card-sorting task in which the cards represented people (e.g., mother, father), places (e.g., vacation destination), and things (e.g., automobile, jewelry). This task effectively rated the objects on a 4-point scale of selfness. He found that mother, father, and spouse were within the seven most frequently chosen objects to describe self (sister, brother, and friend were within the top 20 objects out of a total of 92).

One of the ways of incorporating possessions into the extended self is by knowing them. Although Belk cites Sarte (1943) as stating that the desire to know an object is inspired by a sexual or carnal motivation to have it, a more

general motivation is to have an intimate knowledge of the object, sexual or otherwise. But, Belk goes on to explain, such knowing cannot be passionless and aloof if the object is to become a part of the extended self. This provides a way of understanding and describing the difference in close and distant relationships between gift donors and gift recipients.

Belk also sees giving possessions to others as a means of extending self. Belk states that "a gift continues to be associated with the giver so that the giver's identity is extended to include the recipient" (1988, p. 150). In fact, gift giving is seen not only as a way of extending self but as way of supporting the extended self. By making significant others happy through gift-giving, it makes that part of the extended self that includes those others happy as well. Thus, if giving to others in one's extended self is like giving to oneself, both types of donor/recipient relationships may share specific gift-giving characteristics that would not be present in casual donor/recipient relationships. However, differences should also exist between self-gifts and gifts given to individuals in one's extended self, for only in a self-gift situation is an individual working under perfect knowledge of the recipient's feelings, wants, and desires.

Situational Condition

The second dimension which has not been adequately considered in previous gift-giving studies is the situation, namely the gift giving occasion. Sherry (1983) states that gift-giving occasions can be formal structural events marked by ceremony and ritual, as in the case of ceremonial dates and rites of passage, or they may be emergent, transient events, such as an expression of intimacy. In any case, gift selection along with relative effort in terms of decision making and shopping may often be mediated by the gift occasion.

In his study, Belk (1979) acknowledged the fact that one of the possible factors which may have modified the effect of gift-giving involvement was the expectations which were attached to the specific occasion. Scammon et al. (1982) stated that, intuitively, it would seem that there should be a relationship between the occasion for giving and the function of the gift. Both Belk (1979) and DeVere et al. (1975) found evidence of this by showing that the desirability of certain gift characteristics differed across several gift giving occasions (ignoring recipient). In addition, Chase (1984) hypothesized that the scale of the event (importance) varies directly and the periodicity of the event (how often it occurs) varies indirectly with the expense of the gift. For instance, a bride and groom

frequently acquire expensive gifts on their wedding day as this event is a large-scale, low-periodicity occasion.

Throughout this paper, it has been stressed that both the donor/recipient relationship and the nature of the occasion have a strong effect on the gift giving process. Yet, as stated earlier, most of the research concerning gift giving has failed to manipulate or account for one or both of these factors. It is unrealistic for a single study to sample adequately each of the gift-giving dimensions, but it is the researchers' responsibility to acknowledge these domains and be aware of how these domains could potentially affect different aspects of their study. Only when they are adequately and appropriately sampled will there exist acceptable descriptive information upon which to build a basis for truly understanding gift-giving behavior (Lutz 1979).

CHAPTER 3 HYPOTHESES

From the preceding literature review, it is apparent that there exist some commonalities in the findings as well as some discrepancies. A portion of this research has found that, when a product is presented as a gift, it entails a greater expenditure of time, effort, and money than when the same product is to be used by the buyer (e.g., Clark & Belk, 1979; Gronhaug, 1972; Shapiro, 1975). Yet, other researchers have reported the opposite effect on expenditures of time, effort, and money (e.g., Heeler et al., 1979; Ryans, 1977; Scammon et al., 1982). As mentioned earlier, Belk tried to resolve the inconsistency in these findings by introducing the idea that different gift-giving situations may show considerably different levels of giver involvement and, thus, affect the giver's purchase strategy in a given situation. Unfortunately, from the results of his study, Belk concluded that the concept of involvement was unable to account for these differences by itself. He stated that although it appears that gift-giving situations do differ in involvement and that this affects the amount of care and money devoted to the purchase, other factors play a role as well. Based upon the literature review, several

hypotheses are proposed that incorporate the effects of some of these other factors on gift giving behavior, namely, the donor/recipient relationship and the gift occasion. These hypotheses are meant to address the discrepant findings discussed in the earlier literature review as well as to refine our understanding of the donor/recipient relationship's and occasion's role in the donor's gift-giving behavior.

Information Search Hypotheses

Past research on gift giving has examined the effect of a variety of variables concerning information search on gift selection. Most of these variables deal with the amount of advice sought, the number of stores visited, the amount of information collected, the amount of time spent, and the desirability of certain gift characteristic within different occasions. Gronhaug (1972) found that more advice was sought for gift purchases than purchases for personal use. Belk (1979) cited that two-thirds of respondents in his study said they asked the advice of others when selecting a gift. Thus, seeking advice could be a reflection of the amount of knowledge the donor has about the recipient's wants and/or needs. Gronhaug (1972) also reported that a greater number of individuals purchasing gifts visited more than one store as compared to those purchasing for personal use. Clarke and Belk (1979) reported that individuals buying bubble bath or a blanket as a gift for a close friend

said they would visit more stores and spend more time when purchasing the products than individuals buying the same products for personal use. However, when deciding on jeans or a record album as a gift for a close friend versus for personal use, there was no purchase difference concerning time spent or stores visited. Whereas Clarke and Belk feel that more involving gift purchases will demand more effort, Ryans (1977) argues that since the needs of others are less clearly defined than one's own, it is probably easier to find a brand that fills others' needs once the product class has been selected. He provides evidence of his assumptions stating that outhome gift purchasers took significantly less time to make their purchase than people shopping for personal use. However, he reported that inhome gift purchasers did not significantly differ from personal use purchasers on the amount of purchase time. Last, Heeler et al. (1979) reported no difference in the amount of information sought out by individuals purchasing a watch for a personal friend versus individuals purchasing a watch for personal use. They did find that individuals purchasing a blender for a friend's wedding employed significantly more information in their decision than individuals purchasing a blender for personal use.

In order to discern the effects of the donor/recipient relationship, consider that the amount of knowledge the donor has about the recipient should decrease as the

closeness of the relationship between the donor and recipient decreases. However, the donor's concern about the gift's ability to communicate its intended message should be greater for close donor/recipient relationships than for distant donor/recipient relationships. In order to buy the "right" gift for a close other, donors will be more likely to visit more stores, seek advice from more salespeople, consider more alternatives, and take more time in making their purchases as compared to buying a gift for a distant other. Therefore, the amount of information search should be greater for dyadic gift purchases for close relationships as compared to dyadic gift purchases for distant relationships. Yet, when buying for very important occasions (e.g., weddings), perceived social risk may be high (DeVere et al., 1975; Vincent & Zikmund, 1975). Thus, information search by donors of distant relationships will increase in important purchase situations for it may be seen as a way to reduce perceived social risk.

Past research examining differences between personal use and close friends has found no significant differences between personal use purchases and purchases of gifts for close friends. Individuals may possess enough knowledge of gift recipients within their extended selves so that the amount of information search when purchasing a gift for these individuals is not significantly different when purchasing a product for oneself. In this case, very

important occasions should heighten the amount of information search in both purchase situations (self-gift or gift for close friend/relation). There is no basis for hypothesizing a difference in the amount of information search between self-gift and nonself-gift purchases.

Therefore,

- H1A: The amount of information search (i.e., number of stores visited, amount of salesperson's assistance, amount of time spent, number of products and brands considered) will be greater for purchases for self and gifts for close donor/recipient relationships as compared to gifts for distant donor/recipient relationships.
- H1B: The amount of information search for purchases for close others will not significantly differ from the amount of information search for purchases for self.
- H2: The greater the importance the donor perceives the recipient attaches to the purchase situation, the greater the donor's information search for all donor/recipient relationships.

Price Range Hypotheses

Several studies have examined the desirability of different gift characteristics under different conditions. One of the more common of these characteristics has been price. Gronhaug (1972) reported that individuals studied price more so when buying for personal use than when buying a gift. Heeler et al. (1979) found that information on price was accessed more by individuals when purchasing a blender for personal use than when buying one for a friend's wedding. However, the same amount of information on price was accessed by individuals when purchasing a watch for

personal use as compared to purchasing a watch for a close friend.

Vincent and Zikmund (1975) reported that individuals buying an electric knife for personal use indicated a higher perceived financial risk than individuals buying the same product as a wedding present to a close friend. Goodwin (1990) showed that individuals reporting about obligatory gift purchases stated that money was less of a constraint in gift selection compared to individuals reporting about voluntary gift purchases. In contrast, Scammon et al. (1982) showed that individuals buying for personal use spent the most on flower purchases and individuals giving voluntary gifts spent the least. It should be noted, though, that these studies are not directly comparable given their definitions of voluntary and obligatory purchases. Belk (1982) reported mixed results of price on gift selection. In an earlier article (1979), he looked separately at gift price categories by type of recipient and occasion. He stated that a clearer determinant of the cost of the gift appears to be the nature of the occasion. Focusing only on Christmas gift giving, Cheal (1986) found that the majority of valuable gifts was given to primary kin, with gift giving between husband and wife being the most important.

Based upon these studies, price appears to be more important when buying a product for personal use than when

buying a product as a gift. Yet, it is not clear whether personal use in these studies includes giving to oneself. If it is assumed that giving gifts to others in one's extended self is similar to giving gifts to oneself, then the importance of price in gift selection should be similar for the two contexts. However, individuals buying a product for themselves that is not a self-gift will consider price as more of a constraint on product selection for there will not be an element of indulgence on self in the decision process. Likewise, gift selection for distant recipients will be more constrained by price because the purchase of the gift will be more out of obligation to give (Goodwin 1990). Given that price is considered as less of a restriction when giving to self or to a close other, individuals in these contexts will be less likely to set an approximate price range before beginning the search for a product as compared to individuals who are purchasing a nonself-gift or a gift for a distant other. However, for more important occasions price restrictions on gift selection for distant recipients may be relaxed. Thus, the approximate price range set by individuals before beginning the search for gifts for distant others will widen. Individuals may buy a more expensive gift for someone they know little about as a way of decreasing the perceived social risk involved with selecting an inappropriate gift. In addition, a very important occasion will decrease the

constraint of price on the purchase selection of a nonself-gift. Individuals in these situations will begin the search for nonself-gifts with a wider price range in mind before beginning their search. In fact, this assumption may be applied to any of the donor/recipient purchase situations in which a price range exists before search begins. Thus,

- H3: Individuals buying products as gifts for distant friends/relations or as nonself-gifts will be more likely to set an approximate price range before beginning the search for a product than individuals buying gifts for close friends/relations or for self.
- H4: The greater the importance the donor perceives the recipient attaches to the occasion, the wider the approximate price range that is set by individuals purchasing products for all donor/recipient relationships.

Product Attributes Hypothesis

One of the functions of gift giving is its ability to serve as symbolic communication between the giver and the recipient. In the case of dyadic gift giving, the gift selection can define the degree of recipient importance to the giver as well as help to portray a more complete picture of the giver's perception of the recipient and the giver's self-perception (Belk, 1979; Schwartz, 1967). Belk states that although there are gifts which are selected because they are considered relatively safe through traditional acceptance (e.g., a toaster as a wedding present), there are probably no gifts which are not in some way symbolic of the recipient. In addition, to the extent that the giver perceives the recipient and him/herself to be dissimilar,

the selection of a gift cannot merely be a reflection of the giver's taste. With self-gifts the giver and the recipient are the same, yet gift selection may still serve as a form of self-definition. The selection of a gift's characteristics and the degree to which the gift communicates the giver's impression of the recipient and/or giver should be affected by the nature of the donor/recipient relationship.

The desirability of several gift characteristics besides price have been examined within different gift-giving occasions (Belk, 1979; DeVere et al., 1975). Belk reported that birthday gifts were seen as less prestigious, less lasting, and lower quality than Christmas or wedding gifts but were also seen as more personal and fun. Similar findings were discovered by DeVere et al. (1975) for birthday and wedding occasions. However, past research has not investigated the desirability of different attributes across gift occasions for different types of recipients. It seems one would find differences as well as similarities in the desirability ratings of attributes given to a loved one versus given to a distant relative, for example. Although there is no basis for what these similar and dissimilar attributes might be between recipients, it is felt that gifts given to self and gifts given to close friends and relatives will share more of the desirable and undesirable gift attributes than gifts given to distant

others. There is no basis for hypothesizing a difference between nonself-gifts and the other three contexts. Thus,

H5: Gifts to close friends/relations will have more desirable attributes in common with gifts to self than with gifts to distant friends/relations.

Donor's Ideal Self-Concept Hypotheses

The message the gift communicates about the recipient and/or giver has also been investigated by several researchers (Belk, 1979; Wolfinbarger, 1990). Ignoring both recipient and occasion, Belk found that the giver's ideal self-concept was most reflected by the gift selected. Wolfinbarger reported evidence of both perceived recipient's self-concept and giver's self-concept in respondents' method of gift selection. She stated that it remains to be determined in what situations the giver's self-concept may be more or less important in choosing gifts. Many individual's self-gift stories contained the theme of self-identity which revealed beliefs linking the giver's self-concept to the self-gift qualities (Mick & DeMoss, 1990b). Assuming that close relationships are included in a giver's extended self, both the giver's self-concept and the perceived recipient's self-concept should be represented in the gift selection across gift occasions.

On the other hand, in distant relationships, donors possess limited knowledge about the recipient. It becomes very difficult to select a gift based on what the recipient desires or needs. It is also difficult for the donor to

discern if his/her needs or desires are similar to those of the recipient. Therefore, neither the perceived recipient's self-concept or the giver's self-concept should be significantly represented in the selection of the gift. Instead, gift selection may be guided more by external definitions of appropriateness given the nature of the recipient and the occasion. This should be especially true in occasions which are perceived to be high in social risk.

Moving out of the gift-giving realm, purchases made for oneself strictly out of need should be less likely to possess qualities that are perceived to be linked to the self-concept. Although purchased for oneself, they are more likely to serve a functional purpose rather than a symbolic one. Given that Belk (1979) found that the donor's ideal self-concept was most significantly correlated with the gift selected, it is proposed that

- H6: Donor's ideal self-concept will be significantly more correlated with the qualities of a self-gift and a gift for a close friend/relation as compared to a purchase made for oneself strictly due to necessity.
- H7: In a distant donor/recipient relationship, donor's ideal self-concept will not be significantly correlated with the qualities of the gift.

CHAPTER 4 METHOD

Sample and Data Collection

A total of 261 questionnaires was distributed to and collected from individuals in social and civic organizations and a small university in the southeastern United States. The ratio of undergraduates to nonstudent adults was 92:169, and the ratio of males to females was 111:150. The age range for nonstudent adults was 23 to 77, and their modal household income category was \$50,000 or above. Participation was strictly voluntary, and respondents were not compensated for their participation.

The questionnaires were personally distributed to the designated individuals at a time that was convenient to the particular group. The questionnaire was administered to groups of approximately 10 to 15 individuals at one time. In addition, the researcher waited at the designated location until the questionnaires were completed, and the questionnaires were collected at that time. This allowed respondents' questions to be answered while they were filling out the questionnaire as well as to ensure a higher completion rate.

Instrument

A survey was employed in this study because it could be administered to a broad range of respondents and because of its flexibility in asking different types of questions. In the survey, respondents were asked to respond to both quantitative and qualitative questions. Respondents were informed on the cover page that the survey dealt with consumer purchase behaviors and that the researcher was interested in how consumers make different types of purchase decisions in everyday life.

The survey began with a "critical incident" technique in which respondents were asked to recall and describe in detail the last time they acquired a product in one of four possible conditions within the previous 3 months that was under \$100. Respondents were given a description of a purchase decision involving either a gift for a "close" other, a gift for a "distant" other, a gift for self, or a purchase for self acquired strictly out of necessity. Respondents were then asked to write an account of the last time they purchased a durable product within the purchase condition just described. In writing their accounts, respondents were asked to state what the product was and the circumstances surrounding the purchase of the product and to describe in detail the steps they went through to make the purchase selection. Specifically, they were asked to describe what their purchase thoughts and behaviors were

between the time they realized they needed or wanted to make a purchase and the time they actually purchased a product. Boundaries on the price and the durability of the product were specified in order to reduce the variation in the types of products reported. By reducing the variation in the types of purchases described, it would be less likely that this factor would affect the dependent measures.

The purpose for using the critical incident technique was to aid respondents in activating their memory about a specific past purchase in hopes of improving the accuracy with which they would respond to later questions regarding that purchase. Respondents' accounts were also used to code the product that was purchased and the gift occasion.

After writing their account, respondents were asked to respond to several structured questions. These questions focused specifically on testing Hypotheses 1 through 4 which dealt with the amount of information search and the existence of a price range. These questions were developed based on the researcher's prior knowledge of gift-giving behavior and past gift-giving research. Specifically, the questions asked respondents about the number of products and brands they considered while making their purchase decision, the number of stores they visited while shopping for the product and brand, the number of salespeople that assisted them while shopping for the product and brand, the amount of time they spent shopping for the product and brand, the

amount of money they spent on their purchase, whether they had a specific price range in mind before they went shopping for the product, and, if so, what was the approximate price range that they had in mind. Several questions were included which asked respondents about variables that might possibly be correlated with both the dependent and the independent variables stated in the hypotheses and, unless controlled for, could confound the results. The variables that were included were amount of product knowledge, purchase experience with the product category, and personal income. Next, a question was included to measure the donor's perception of the importance of the gift occasion to the recipient. Last, several questions were added to check if individuals responded correctly to the purchase scenario described in the critical incident section. Respondents were asked the approximate date of purchase to ensure the purchase took place within the past 3 months. Respondents in the dyadic gift-giving situation were asked to state their relationship with the person to whom they gave the gift and approximately how long they had known that person. These two questions were used to verify that the gift recipient had a close or distant relationship to the giver. Respondents who described a purchase for oneself were asked to what extent the product that they purchased was perceived by them to be a gift to themselves.

The last set of structured questions were developed to test Hypotheses 5 and 6 which dealt with qualities of the purchased product and the donor's ideal self-concept. Specifically, respondents were asked to judge the applicability of a set of qualities of products for their given gift recipient and occasion (7-point scale, from "Does not apply at all" to "Applies very strongly"). The qualities were represented as adjectives which were taken from past gift giving research (Belk, 1979; Mic, & DeMoss, 1990; DeVere et al. 1975). Several adjectives that were used include inexpensive, satisfying, exciting, fun, thoughtful, prestigious, and perfect. On the following two pages, respondents were asked to rate their ideal self-concept on a series of 40 adjectives (7-point scale, from "Seldom would I like this to be me" to "Most of the time I would like this to be me"). This ideal self-concept measure is a version of the Bills et al. (1951) Index of Adjustment and Values that was modified and used by Belk (1976, 1979).

The questionnaire was pretested on a subset of the target population before the survey was administered. After finishing the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they had any difficulty understanding the instructions and/or answering any questions. Specific attention was paid to how individuals interpreted the critical incident description to ensure respondents would make accurate distinctions between "distant" others, "close" others, self-gifts, and necessary

purchases. Based on the results of the pretest, minor revisions were made to the questionnaire before it was administered to the designated sample.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS

General Analysis

The 261 critical incidents were content analyzed according to the type of product and occasion. This analysis was completed by two business undergraduate students using a preestablished list of potential types of products and occasions. The category of unable to code included individuals who did not respond to the critical incident technique or those who failed to report the occasion and/or the product. Coding agreements occurred in 91% of the cases, and disagreements were resolved by a third judge.

Table 1 provides the percentages of each type of occasion for the four purchase situations. The three most reported self-gift occasions were to be nice to oneself, to celebrate an accomplishment, and to cheer oneself up and add to a collection tying for third place. These results are very similar to the results provided by Mick and DeMoss (1990) with personal accomplishment and feeling down being cited as the two most frequently reported self-gift circumstances. For gifts to close others, situations involving giving a gift for someone's birthday, to be nice

Table 1

Type of Occasion Reported by Purchase Situation

Type of Occasion	Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
Anniversary	0%	4%	0%	0%
Wedding	0%	5%	29%	0%
Birthday	3%	36%	17%	0%
Going Away	0%	0%	11%	0%
Thank You	1%	3%	10%	0%
Housewarming	0%	1%	2%	0%
Celebrate Accomplishment	15%	0%	17%	1%
Just Because/ To Be Nice	22%	12%	4%	0%
To Cheer Up	10%	0%	0%	0%
Secretary's Day	0%	0%	4%	0%
Easter	0%	3%	0%	0%
Father's Day	1%	7%	0%	0%
Mother's Day	0%	10%	0%	0%
Add to Collection/ Hobby	10%	0%	0%	0%
Shower (Wedding/Baby)	0%	0%	4%	0%
Extra Money	3%	0%	0%	2%
Vacation	4%	5%	0%	0%
Sale	7%	0%	0%	2%

Table 1--continued.

Type of Occasion	Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
Recognition of New Need	6%	0%	0%	64%
Recognition of Replacement Need	1%	0%	2%	24%
Other	0%	4%	0%	1%
Unable to Code	17%	10%	0%	6%
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

to someone, or for Mother's Day were cited the most frequently. Weddings were reported to be the most frequent gift-giving occasions involving distant others with birthdays and celebrating accomplishments tying for second. It should be noted that in eight out of nine cases, gifts given as a celebration of accomplishment were given to distant others as a graduation present. However, this did not apply to any of the self-gift stories. The third most frequently cited distant other occasion was gifts given as a going away present, typically to a coworker. There were two major occasions cited most frequently for nonself-gifts. These two occasions were recognition of a new need and recognition of a replacement need. The high frequency of these occasions was expected due to the nonself-gift

scenario description asking for individuals to report a purchase made strictly out of need.

The results of the reported product frequencies are listed in Table 2. The top three products purchased as a gift to oneself or a close other were clothes, shoes, and jewelry. The most frequently purchased gifts to distant others were clothes, flowers, appliances, and household items. Last, clothes, household items, and appliances were the three most frequently cited products for purchases for self made strictly out of need.

In order to ensure individuals in the self-gift and nonself-gift contexts were responding to the correct purchase situation, a cross-tabulation was constructed for the measure reflecting the degree to which the purchase was perceived to be a self-gift in relation to the two purchase contexts. The measure consisted of an 9-point scale with 0 being very much a self-gift and 8 being not at all a self-gift. In order to analyze this scale, response frequencies and average ratings for the self-gift and nonself-gift contexts were analyzed. Response frequencies were examined by dividing the scale into three sections with each section containing 3 scale points. By comparing the two sections containing the extreme scale points, 48% of the respondents in the self-gift context strongly felt that the purchase was a self-gift (scale rating was 2 or below), whereas only 19% strongly felt that the purchase was not a self-gift (scale

Table 2

Type of Product by Purchase Situation

Types of Products	Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
Clothes	31%	28%	15%	20%
Flowers/Plant	0%	10%	11%	0%
Toy	0%	3%	4%	0%
Jewelry	10%	12%	2%	0%
Music	8%	3%	4%	0%
Book(s)	4%	3%	6%	4%
Shoes	13%	0%	0%	10%
Alcohol	1%	3%	4%	0%
Appliance	3%	0%	11%	11%
Car Part	4%	0%	2%	10%
Tools	0%	0%	0%	6%
Household Item	4%	4%	9%	16%
Sports Equipment	7%	2%	8%	2%
Personal Care	1%	0%	0%	7%
Photo Album/Frame	0%	3%	8%	1%
Vase/Figurine	3%	5%	6%	0%
Handbag	1%	5%	2%	1%
Sunglasses	1%	2%	2%	0%
Other	6%	7%	6%	6%
Unable to Code	3%	10%	0%	6%
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

rating was 6 or above). Similarly, 54% of the respondents in the nonself-gift context strongly felt that the purchase was not a self-gift, whereas only 18% strongly felt that the purchase was a self-gift. In addition, the mean self-gift rating for individuals in the self-gift context equalled 3.02, whereas the mean self-gift rating for individuals in the nonself-gift context equalled 5.09. Comparison of these two means revealed a significant difference ($t=6.31$, $p<.0001$).¹

Two additional cross-tabulations were constructed for the measures reflecting the length and type of recipient relationship in relation to two of the purchase contexts: gifts to close others and gifts to distant others. The cross-tabulation for length of the relationship by purchase context revealed that the donor knew the recipient an average of 18-1/2 years with a range of 3 months to 82 years in the close other context. However, in the distant other context, donors reported to have known the recipient for an average of 4 years and 9 months with a range of 1 month to 30 years.

¹Although these results indicate that the requests to describe a specific purchase in a given context were generally successful, some respondents did not follow the purchase description when relating their critical incident stories. These respondents were reclassified into a different purchase context based on their self-gift scale rating. However, most of these results were not substantially different from their initial purchase context classification.

Table 3 provides the results for the cross-tabulation for type of relationship by purchase context. Close others tended to be friends or individuals in respondent's nuclear family whereas distant others tended to be acquaintances, friends, or friends-of-a-friend. Although friends were cited with a high frequency in both situations, it is highly unlikely that the definition of a friend would be similar in the two conditions. In conclusion, the results of these cross-tabulations provide evidence that individuals were responding to their assigned purchase condition.

Hypotheses Regarding Information Search

The hypotheses relating to information search are

- H1A: The amount of information search (i.e., number of stores visited, amount of salesperson's assistance, amount of time spent, number of products and brands considered) will be greater for purchases for self and for close donor/recipient relationships as compared to gifts for distant donor/recipient relationships.
- H1B: The amount of information search for purchases for close others will not significantly differ from the amount of information search for purchases for self.
- H2: The greater the importance the donor perceives the recipient attaches to the purchase situation, the greater the donor's information search for all donor/recipient relationships.

Factor analysis was used to identify a common dimension(s) among the five information search variables. These five variables were number of products considered, number of brands considered, number of stores visited, amount of salesperson's assistance and time spent on the purchase decision. The results of a varimax rotation of the

Table 3

Type of Recipient Reported* for Gifts to Close Others and Gifts to Distant Others

Type of Recipient	Close Other	Distant Other
Grandparent	2%	0%
Parent	18%	0%
Child	9%	0%
Spouse	15%	2%
Sibling	7%	2%
Cousin	4%	4%
In-law	4%	4%
Friend	39%	27%
Spouse's/Parent's Friend	0%	9%
Friend's Spouse/Child	0%	4%
Neighbor	2%	6%
Coworker	0%	13%
Acquaintance	0%	29%
TOTALS	100%	100%

*Note that the recipient categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a neighbor could also be classified as a coworker.

factor matrix indicated that two independent factors were extracted with eigenvalues greater than one. However, time spent on the purchase decision did not load highly on either factor. Therefore, a second factor analysis was performed

with the remaining four information search variables. Table 4 provides the results of a varimax rotation of the factor matrix underlying the four information search variables. Two independent factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted from the data. A cutoff of .60 was used for item-scale selection. The two variables, amount of stores visited and salesperson's assistance, loaded highly on the first factor. This makes intuitive sense given that it is more likely that the more stores one visits, the more salespersons will assist him or her. This factor was interpreted as the number of separate pieces of information individuals collected when making a purchase decision. The two variables that had high factor loadings on the second factor were number of products considered and number of brands considered. The factor was interpreted as reflecting the number of alternatives individuals considered in their purchase decision. Aggregate measures were then created for each dimension of information search by summing the raw scores for the items loading on each of the two representative factors.

The internal reliability of the information search subscales was assessed using coefficient alpha (Cronbach 1960). The alpha coefficient for the number of pieces information subscale (STORE/SP) was 0.75 while the coefficient for the number of alternatives subscale (ALTERNATIVES) was 0.57.

Table 4

Factor Analysis of Information Search Variables

Information Search Variables	Derived Factors	
	(1) STORE/SP	(2) ALTERNATIVES
Products	0.2382	(-0.7185)
Brands	0.0764	(0.8444)
Stores	(0.7789) ^a	-0.1399
Salespeople	(0.8348)	-0.0022
Eigenvalues	1.5366	1.0844

^a = Loadings above .60 in parentheses.

In order to examine Hypotheses 1A and 1B, three one-way ANOVAs were performed on the two information search subscales (i.e., ALTERNATIVES, STORE/SP) and time spent on the purchase decision to detect any differences between the four purchase situations. The effect of the perceived importance of the purchase situation was analyzed by computing correlations between this variable and the three information search variables within each of the four purchase contexts. This analysis was executed in order to test Hypothesis 2.

The results of the three one-way ANOVAs indicated that the purchase situation does affect individuals' information

search with respect to the number of the stores visited and number of salespeople that assisted them (STORE/SP; $F=3.36$, $p < .01$). These differences are, for the most part, in the predicted direction according to Hypotheses 1A and 1B. On average, the amount of stores visited and salesperson's assistance equalled 4.7 for individuals purchasing products for themselves that were considered necessities, 3.2 for individuals buying gifts for close others, 2.9 for individuals buying self-gifts, and 2.3 for those buying gifts for distant others. However, the only significant differences concerning average amount of stores visited and salespersons' assistance between the purchase contexts were found when comparing purchases for self made out of necessity and the remaining three purchase situations: self-gift ($t = -2.96$, $p < .00$), close other ($t = -2.28$, $p < .02$), and distant other ($t = -3.50$, $p < .00$).

In contrast, the results indicated that the purchase situation did not affect individuals' information search regarding the number of the products and brands considered (ALTERNATIVES; $F = 0.29$, $p < .83$) or time spent on the purchase decision ($F = 0.34$, $p < .80$).

Table 5 provides the results of the correlations between the perceived importance of the occasion and the three information search variables, ALTERNATIVES, STORE/SP, and time spent on the purchase decision. For self-gifts and nonself-gifts, the relationship between the perceived

Table 5

Correlations between Information Search Variables and Importance of Occasion by Purchase Context

Information Search Variables	Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
Alternatives	.16 (.09)	.06 (.31)	.23 (.05)	.19 (.06)
Store/SP	-.04 (.36)	-.23 (.03)	.11 (.21)	.07 (.28)
Time	-.04 (.37)	-.19 (.06)	.20 (.08)	-.03 (.41)

importance of the occasion and number of alternatives considered is marginally significant. The number of salespeople and stores and time spent are not significantly related to perceived importance of these two occasions. However, as donors perceive the occasion to be important to close others, they visit more stores and ask for more salespeople's assistance. In addition, the relationship between time spent on the decision and perceived importance of the occasion is marginally significant. That is, as the donors' perception of the occasion's importance increased, donors increased the time spent on the purchase decision. For gifts purchased for distant others, the number of products and brands considered was significantly related to the donors' perceived importance of the occasion. That is, as the donors' perceived the occasion to be more important

to distant others, they considered more products and brands when making their purchase decision. In addition, the relationship between time spent on the decision and perceived importance of the occasion was marginally significant. Donors purchasing a gift for distant others spent more time on the decision when they perceived the occasion to very important to the recipient. From these results, it was found that Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported.

Three covariates were included in each of the one-way ANOVAs in order to remove any extraneous variation in the information search variables. The covariates that were included were the amount spent on the purchase, past experience with the product category, and product knowledge. However, the results indicated that the inclusion of these covariates had no significant effect on information search within each of the purchase situations.

Hypotheses Regarding Price Range

The hypotheses relating to price range are

- H3: Individuals buying products as gifts for distant friends/relations or as nonself-gifts will be more likely to set an approximate price range before beginning the search for a product than individuals buying gifts for close friends/relations or for self.
- H4: The greater the importance the donor perceives the recipient attaches to the occasion, the wider the approximate price range that is set by individuals purchasing products for all donor/recipient relationships.

In order to test Hypothesis 3, a Chi-Square test was performed in order to detect whether significantly more individuals set a price range before beginning their search for a gift for a distant other or a nonself-gift as compared to those who were searching for a gift to a close other or self. A Pearson Product Moment correlation between the donor's perception of the occasion's importance to the recipient and the width of the price range set by the donor was computed for each of the purchase situations in order to test Hypothesis 4. This analysis was performed in order to examine the strength of the relationship between these two variables within each of the purchase contexts.

Table 6 provides the results that support Hypothesis 3 ($\chi^2 = 3.97, p < .04$). Eighty-one percent of the individuals buying necessities for themselves or gifts for distant others started their search with a price range in mind, whereas only 70% of the individuals buying self-gifts or gifts to close others set a price range before beginning their search. Thus, the purchase situation does affect the likelihood that individuals will set a range on the price they are willing to spend before beginning their search for the product.

One might speculate that the existence of a price range may have been affected by the price of the product. A point-biserial correlation was computed within each of the four purchase contexts in order to analyze the relationship

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation of Purchase Context by Existence of Price Range Before Search

	Existence of Price Range		Totals
	Yes	No	
Self-Gift/ Close Other	98 (70%)	41 (30%)	139
Distant Other/ Nonself-Gift	99 (81%)	23 (19%)	122
Totals	197	64	261

$$\chi^2 = 3.97, p < .04$$

between these two variables. The results indicated that the relationship between these two variables was not significant in any of the four purchase contexts.

The results of the Pearson correlations indicate that a significant relationship between the existence of a price range and the occasion's perceived importance does exist for nonself-gifts ($r = 0.69, p < .00005$) and gifts to close others ($r = .23, p < .06$). Specifically, as the donor perceived the purchase situation to become more important to recipients in the close other and the nonself-gift contexts, the price range donors were willing to pay increased in width. However, the correlations between these two

variables for self-gifts ($r = -.03$, $p < .41$) and gifts to distant others ($r = .05$, $p < .38$) are not significant. Thus, the data provide only partial support for Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis Regarding Product Qualities

The hypothesis concerning product qualities is

H5: Gifts to close friends/relations will have more desirable attributes in common with gifts to self than with gifts to distant friends/relations.

In order to determine whether the products purchased varied according to the 12 qualities across the four different purchase contexts, a series of analyses were performed. First, the interaction of qualities and contexts was tested and found to be highly significant ($F = 8.68$, $p < .0001$). Then, the simple main effects of the four contexts were tested for the 12 qualities and all were statistically significant (p 's $< .001$), with the exception of four qualities (lasting, inexpensive, prestigious, and high quality). Table 7 provides results of Tukey pairwise comparisons performed on the remaining eight qualities to test for significant differences between the purchase contexts.

Two of the eight qualities were rated similarly for self-gift and gifts for close others and had significantly dissimilar ratings for gifts for distant others as well as nonself-gifts. Self-gifts and gifts to close others were viewed significantly more satisfying and personal than gifts to distant others and nonself-gifts. The personal quality

Table 7

Mean Ratings of Qualities of Products Applicable in Four Contexts

Product Qualities	Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
Practical	3.6 ^d	3.5 ^d	4.2	5.1 ^{a,b}
Satisfying	5.1 ^{c,d}	5.0 ^{c,d}	4.3 ^{a,b}	4.4 ^{a,b}
Memorable	3.3 ^{b,d}	4.4 ^{a,d}	3.7 ^d	1.8 ^{a,b,c}
Exciting	3.3 ^d	3.3 ^d	2.7 ^d	1.7 ^{a,b,c}
Fun	3.7 ^{b,c,d}	2.9 ^{a,d}	2.6 ^a	1.9 ^{a,b}
Thoughtful	2.4 ^{b,c,d}	4.9 ^{a,d}	4.3 ^{a,d}	1.4 ^{a,b,c}
Unusual	2.1 ^d	2.5 ^d	1.7	1.2 ^{a,b}
Personal	4.0 ^{c,d}	4.3 ^{c,d}	2.9 ^{a,b}	2.4 ^{a,b}

7-point-scale: 0=does not apply at all; 7=applies very highly

a= significantly different ($p<.05$) from self-gift context, in same row

b= significantly different ($p<.05$) from close other context, in same row

c= significantly different ($p<.05$) from distant other context, in same row

d= significantly different ($p<.05$) from nonself-gift context, in same row

of gifts to close others supports the idea of the recipient of the gift being included in one's extended self. In self-gifts, this quality helps to distinguish how different giving a gift to self is perceived from purchasing a product for self out of need. The fact that self-gifts and gifts to

close others were seen as more satisfying purchases provides evidence of the specialness of giving gifts to individuals within one's extended self. Purchases made for distant others or for self out of need were not perceived to be as satisfying because the donors may have felt obligated to buy the product for one reason or another.

Self-gifts and gifts to close others were also rated similarly on unusual and practical. These two contexts did not differ significantly from gifts to distant others on unusual or practical mean ratings yet they did differ significantly from nonself-gift's mean ratings on these two qualities. Nonself-gifts were considered most practical and the least unusual. In fact, nonself-gifts scored the lowest mean ratings on all the attributes except practical.

None of the gift-giving contexts differed significantly on the mean rating for exciting. Thus, the giving of gifts has some degree of excitement no matter how intimate the donor/recipient relationship is. On the other hand, the purchase of a nonself-gift is perceived as being significantly less exciting than any of the three gift-giving contexts.

However, self-gifts and gifts to close others were perceived to be significantly different on several qualities. Gifts to close others were perceived to be more memorable and thoughtful whereas self-gifts were perceived to be more fun. Gifts to distant others were also

considered to be more thoughtful than self-gifts which could mean that respondents find it hard to be thoughtful to oneself as compared to being thoughtful to another person. Nonself-gifts were again rated significantly lower than self-gifts and gifts to close others on thoughtful, memorable, and fun. In addition, thoughtful and memorable were seen as significantly less applicable for nonself-gifts as compared to gifts to distant others.

Overall, the results indicated that gifts to oneself were perceived as possessing many similar qualities as gifts to close others. However, they also shared some of the same qualities with gifts to distant others. The most prevalent differences though were between nonself-gifts and gifts. For all qualities, nonself-gifts were rated as significantly different from self-gifts and gifts to close others. And for three of the nine qualities, nonself-gifts were seen as significantly different from gifts to distant others as well.

Hypotheses Regarding Donor's Ideal Self-Concept

The hypotheses relating to donor's ideal self-concept are

- H6: Donor's ideal self-concept will be significantly more correlated with the qualities of a self-gift and a gift for a close friend/relation as compared to a purchase made for oneself strictly due to necessity.
- H7: In a distant donor/recipient relationship, donor's ideal self-concept will not be significantly correlated with the qualities of the gift.

In order to test Hypothesis 6, canonical correlations were computed to test for the relationship between the ideal self-concept ratings as a set of predictor variables and the gift quality ratings as a set of criterion variables for each of the three purchase situations specified, specifically, the self-gift, close other, and nonself-gift contexts. The strength of the association in this study between the predictor variable set (ideal self-concept ratings) and the criterion variable set (gift quality ratings) was assessed by inspecting the magnitudes of both the canonical correlation coefficients and the redundancy index for each pair of linear composites derived from the data. By inspecting the canonical correlation coefficients, a rough estimate of the strength of the relationship between each set of variables was derived. Specifically, the canonical coefficient indicates the correlation between the canonical scores for each linear combination of variables (Green, 1978). An analysis of the canonical correlation coefficient does not, however, reveal the amount of variance shared by the two sets of variables. Consequently, it necessitates inspection of the magnitude of the redundancy index, an asymmetric index measuring how much variance in one set of variables is shared by the variability in the other set (Stewart & Love, 1968). The relative importance of a variable in a set of variables was indicated by the canonical cross-loadings. The cross-loading value reflects

the variable's correlation with the canonical score for the other set of variables. These statistics computed for the most significant linear composite provided a basis for subset interpretation.

Table 8 shows the results of correlating the 40 ideal self-concept items with the 12 product quality items for the three purchase situations. The only canonical correlation which approaches significance is in the self-gift context ($R = .87, p < .14$). The redundancy index for the canonical function indicates that 13% of the variance in the ideal self-concept items is accounted for by the variability in the product quality items. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was only weakly supported by the data.

An examination of the structural coefficients for the canonical function concerning the self-gift context indicates that the composite score for the product quality items is significantly related to three of the ideal self-concept items (the cross-loading values for both conflict dimensions exceed the .30 level suggested by Lambert and Durand (1975) as an acceptable minimum loading value). Specifically, the composite product quality score is negatively related to competitive and fault-finding ideal self-concept items and positively related to the merry self-concept item. The composite score for the ideal self-concept ratings is positively related to six of the product

Table 8

Canonical Analysis for Product Attributes versus Perceived
Recipient Ideal Self-Concept Ratings

Canonical Cross-Loadings by Purchase Situation				
		Self-Gift	Close Other	NonSelf-Gift
Ideal Self-Concept Ratings	Adventurous	.05	.31	-.27
	Appreciative	.14	.24	.13
	Artistic	.18	.15	.16
	Attractive	.22	.14	.04
	Broad-minded	.14	.17	-.02
	Busy	.19	.18	.08
	Calm	.21	.19	.13
	Clever	-.13	.20	-.10
	Competitive	-.34	.05	-.18
	Confident	.09	.00	-.10
	Considerate	.09	.07	.28
	Cruel	.04	-.20	.14
	Dependable	.05	-.09	-.22
	Emotional	.24	.24	-.03
	Energetic	.29	.14	-.05
	Fashionable	.14	.30	.16
	Fault-Finding	-.31	.05	.12
	Friendly	.11	.12	.01
	Fun-Loving	.22	.26	.19
	Generous	.18	.22	.32
	Helpful	.00	.16	.14
	Imaginative	-.06	-.03	-.16
	Informal	.21	.10	-.10
	Intelligent	.01	.13	-.01
	Interesting	.16	.19	-.01
	Kind	.21	.20	.01
	Mature	.28	-.11	-.01
	Merry	.36	.13	.16
	Orderly	.25	.20	-.15
	Outgoing	.22	.10	.21
	Poised	.27	.00	-.18
	Reckless	.05	-.10	-.03
	Sarcastic	-.17	-.04	-.14
	Selfish	-.09	-.19	-.06
	Sincere	.17	.04	-.07
	Stubborn	.05	.07	-.04
	Successful	-.01	-.07	-.11
	Tactful	.12	-.10	-.24
	Thrifty	.05	-.12	-.08
	Unconventional	-.14	.05	-.04

Table 8--continued.

Canonical Cross-Loadings by Purchase Situation				
		Self-Gift	Close Other	NonSelf-Gift
Product	Practical	.54	.13	-.00
Attribute	Satisfying	.36	.55	.25
Ratings	Memorable	.09	.11	.04
	Lasting	.44	.34	.43
	Exciting	.19	.34	.14
	Fun	.17	.03	.03
	Thoughtful	.35	.66	-.13
	Inexpensive	.12	.01	-.40
	Prestigious	.46	.41	.13
	Unusual	-.05	-.03	-.38
	Personal	.50	.21	.18
	High Quality	-.08	.33	.25
	Canonical R	.87	.90	.90
	Significance	.14	.38	.35
	Redundancy	.13	.08	.02

quality items, those being practical, satisfying, lasting, thoughtful, prestigious, and personal.

In order to test Hypothesis 7, an additional canonical correlation analysis was performed to test for the relationship between the predictor set (ideal self-concept ratings) and the criterion set (product quality ratings) for the distant other purchase context. The results of this analysis revealed that there was a perfect correlation between the two variable sets. Being skeptical of a perfect correlation between any two variables, the data were examined further for alternative explanations. The most likely reason for the perfect correlation between the two

variable sets appeared to be the number of respondents within each purchase conditions. There were approximately equal numbers of respondents in the self-gift, close other, and nonself-gift contexts (71, 68, and 70, respectively). However, the number of respondents in the distant other context was much lower with only 52 individuals. Given that the total number of variables used in the canonical correlation analyses was 52, there exists a 1:1 ratio of variables to data points in the distant other context. Thus, this fact was the probable cause of the spurious correlation. Therefore, in order to be able to examine the relationship between ideal self-concept ratings and product quality ratings in the distant other context, the number of variables in one or both of the data sets had to be reduced.

Factor analysis was used on the Index of Adjustment and Values as a way to reduce the number of variables. It was felt that this index contained several subscales each of which could be summed using the raw scores for the items loading on that subscale. Hoge and McCarthy (1983) made reference to the idea that Bills et al. Index yields theoretically derived subscales within the domains of real and ideal self in their assessment of validity and reliability issues in self-regard measures. However, this widely used Index has always been assumed to be unidimensional for past research has yet to test this property.

The unidimensionality of the Index of Adjustment and Values was assessed using a varimax rotation of the initial factor matrix underlying the Index items. The results in Table 9 indicated that 11 independent factors were extracted from the data with eigenvalues greater than one. Thus, the Index of Adjustment and Values does not appear to be unidimensional. Given that this analysis was more exploratory in nature, a more liberal cutoff value of .50 was used for item scale selection. In addition, only factors with more than one item loading highly on them were consider in order to create more meaningful aggregate measures or subscales. The aggregate measures were created for each of the remaining nine factors by summing the raw scores for the items loading on the representative factor.

The reliability of the Index subscales was assessed using coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1960). Only the coefficients for subscale 1, subscale 2, subscale 3, subscale 4, subscale 7, and subscale 9 were well above the .50 reliability levels as suggested by Nunnally (1967) as a minimum level for acceptable reliability, with alphas equalling .86, .75, .73, .65, .72, and .69, respectively.

Next, each of the six remaining dimensions or subscales were carefully examined in order to define which aspect of the ideal self-concept was being measured by each dimension. The first subscale contained the qualities of friendly, fun-loving, generous, helpful, and kind. Thus, this subscale

Table 9

Factor Analysis of Ideal Self-Concept Items

Ideal Self-Concept Ratings	Derived Factors										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Adventurous	.013	-.025	.015	.133	.215	.178	.016	-.019	.101	(.782)	-.040
Appreciative	.273	-.128	(.515)	.113	.377	-.156	.038	.188	-.043	.176	-.039
Artistic	.044	-.063	.104	-.093	(.822)	.034	.143	-.112	-.002	-.004	-.006
Attractive	.184	-.025	.301	.211	.146	.170	(.555)	-.200	.357	.112	.129
Broad-minded	.108	-.024	.064	.271	(.593)	.024	-.012	.253	.045	.215	.078
Busy	.124	.004	.152	.041	.020	.037	-.061	(.728)	.125	.038	-.056
Calm	.073	-.261	.209	.248	.171	.264	.059	-.081	(-.507)	-.177	.159
Clever	.049	.079	.189	.168	.167	(.709)	.009	.029	.088	.157	.089
Competitive	.061	.187	-.153	.174	-.105	(.585)	.235	.272	-.072	.195	.081
Confident	.131	-.075	.160	(.676)	.064	.228	-.075	.024	.258	.123	.108
Considerate	.325	-.323	.307	.438	.246	.155	.064	.161	.035	-.008	.007
Cruel	-.068	(.658)	.125	-.266	-.078	.140	.199	-.140	-.064	-.112	.157
Dependable	.128	-.135	(.756)	-.053	.076	.031	-.014	.057	.055	.123	.155
Emotional	.215	.294	.043	-.126	.216	.467	.207	.184	-.173	.066	.280
Energetic	.220	-.034	.152	.199	.041	.105	.171	.299	(.577)	.062	.178
Fashionable	.208	.063	.162	.101	.095	.025	(.810)	.011	.055	.098	.030
Fault-											
Finding	-.179	.459	-.265	-.126	-.058	.217	.144	.319	-.103	.004	.107
Friendly	(.774) ^a	-.111	.218	.083	.024	.028	.154	-.085	.120	.054	.151
Fun-Loving	(.722)	-.010	.153	-.073	.050	.137	.049	-.072	.186	.268	.052
Generous	(.803)	-.083	.026	.226	.155	.030	.029	.099	-.030	.004	-.033
Helpful	(.786)	-.154	.007	.205	.152	.040	-.030	.245	-.021	-.126	.040
Imaginative	.374	-.044	.065	-.053	.485	.410	.166	.076	.165	.038	.094
Informal	.313	.275	.131	.008	.107	.007	-.457	-.217	-.134	.170	.305
Intelligent	.071	-.104	-.008	.447	.183	.298	.085	.082	(.561)	.008	.025
Interesting	.384	.023	.374	.215	.104	.050	.185	-.148	(.531)	.154	.065
Kind	(.628)	-.136	.294	.367	.034	.177	.064	.197	.067	.012	.034

Table 9--continued.

Ideal Self-Concept Ratings	Derived Factors										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Mature	.319	-.058	.295	.089	.197	.186	.040	.413	-.078	-.166	.187
Merry	.438	.063	.146	.005	.152	.053	.158	.377	.117	.294	.240
Orderly	.454	.108	.134	.046	-.106	.123	.196	.137	.132	(.535)	.167
Outgoing	.193	-.051	(.601)	.264	-.079	.103	.208	.266	.077	-.098	.037
Poised	.159	-.100	(.625)	.300	.096	.212	.175	.043	.041	.046	.175
Reckless	.089	(.619)	-.031	.197	-.036	-.196	-.067	-.079	-.062	.290	-.082
Sarcastic	-.099	(.764)	-.050	-.066	-.095	-.109	.096	-.036	-.020	.213	-.158
Selfish	-.188	(.773)	-.072	-.098	.019	.018	-.069	.043	.077	-.121	-.068
Sincere	.435	-.160	.239	.343	-.071	-.109	.006	.323	.035	-.054	.224
Stubborn	-.045	(.579)	-.046	-.095	.056	.195	-.247	.080	.120	-.174	-.042
Successful	.256	-.098	.056	(.658)	-.080	.121	.223	.024	.004	.110	-.067
Tactful	.209	-.134	.224	.427	.089	.140	.100	-.036	-.007	.032	-.472
Thrifty	.021	-.135	.173	-.013	-.006	.059	.010	.059	.057	-.022	(.776)
Unconven- tional	.067	.259	-.282	.134	.326	-.117	-.276	-.053	.142	.128	.392
Eigen- values	9.02	3.32	2.28	1.90	1.68	1.64	1.33	1.23	1.11	1.04	1.03
Percent of Total											
Variation	4.55	3.21	2.76	2.56	2.01	1.95	1.85	1.77	1.69	1.62	1.61

a=Loadings above .50 in parentheses.

was inductively defined as the benevolent ideal self-concept because it represents the desire to do good to others. Conversely, the second subscale represents the malevolent ideal self-concept with cruel, reckless, sarcastic, selfish, and stubborn loading highly on it. It conveys the desire to wish harm or evil on others. The third subscale represents the conscientious aspects of one's ideal self-concept. The items that loaded highly on this factor were appreciative, dependable, orderly, and poised. This factor conveys how careful and painstaking individuals desire to be in their behavior toward objects and/or other individuals. The fourth factor consisted of confident and successful which may be interpreted to represent how self-assured individuals desire to be. The desire to have a pleasing appearance or to be personable is represented by the fifth subscale with high loadings on the attractive and fashionable items. Last, the desire to be stimulating to others and possibly oneself is demonstrated by the sixth subscale. This factor had high factor loadings on energetic, intelligent, and interesting and suggests the desire to possess the ability to excite or arouse.

Table 10 shows the results of correlating the six dimensions of ideal self-concept with the 12 product qualities by each of the four purchase situations. Each of the four purchase contexts were included in the canonical correlation analyses to explore the relationship between the

Table 10

Canonical Analysis for Product Attributes versus Perceived Recipient Ideal Self-Concept Ratings

		Canonical Cross-Loadings by Purchase Situation			
		Self-Gift	Close Other	Distant Other	NonSelf-Gift
IDEAL SELF- CONCEPT RATINGS*	Subscale 1	-.05	-.19	-.57	-.17
	Subscale 2	-.03	.44	.31	.54
	Subscale 3	.08	.01	-.21	-.26
	Subscale 4	-.15	.07	-.33	-.27
	Subscale 7	-.15	-.02	-.04	-.10
	Subscale 9	-.02	-.22	-.33	-.18
PRODUCT ATTRI- BUTES	Practical	.30	-.07	-.24	-.09
	Satisfying	.35	-.01	-.11	.07
	Memorable	-.12	.10	.15	.16
	Lasting	.05	-.05	-.04	-.12
	Exciting	-.02	.15	.19	.24
	Fun	-.13	.19	.12	.18
	Thoughtful	-.02	-.36	.05	.10
	Inexpensive	-.14	-.08	-.09	.12
	Prestigious	.06	.10	.32	.31
	Unusual	.09	.35	.13	.37
	Personal	.10	.09	.34	-.11
	High Quality	.41	.09	.05	.02
	Canonical R	.68	.61	.65	.57
	Significance	.09	.35	.76	.27
	Redundancy	.06	.05	.11	.08

*Subscale 1 = Friendly, Fun-loving, Generous, Helpful, Kind

Subscale 2 = Cruel, Reckless, Sarcastic, Selfish, Stubborn

Subscale 3 = Appreciative, Dependable, Orderly, Poised

Subscale 4 = Confident, Successful

Subscale 7 = Attractive, Fashionable

Subscale 9 = Energetic, Intelligent, Interesting

newly created ideal self-concept subscales and the 12 product quality items. The canonical correlations for the

contexts of self-gift, close other, distant other, and nonself-gift are .68, .61, .65, and .57, respectively. Similar to the first set of canonical correlation analyses, the self-gift context is the only correlation to approach significance at the .09 level by the chi-square test. The redundancy index for this canonical functions indicates that only 6% of the variance in the ideal self-concept dimensions was accounted for by the variability in the product quality items. Although these results provide support for Hypothesis 7, care should be taken in their interpretation due to the fact that none of the correlations within each of the purchase contexts were significant at the conventional .05 level. In addition, the factor analysis that was performed was exploratory in nature.

Last, an examination of the structural coefficients for the canonical function concerning the self-gift context indicates that the composite score for the product quality items is not significantly related to any of the ideal self-concept subscales. The composite score for the ideal self-concept subscales is positively related to three of the product quality items, those being practical, satisfying, and high quality.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the donor/recipient relationship and the perceived importance of the purchase occasion does affect certain aspects of individuals' purchase behavior. The most intriguing and prominent differences were found between products purchased as self-gifts and products purchased for self out of necessity. In some cases, purchase behavior was not always influenced by the perceived importance of the occasion and the donor/recipient relationship in the predicted direction. In these instances, the results may have been due to study's methodology. After laying out the conclusions of this study, these limitations will be discussed. In addition, future research stemming from the study's conclusions will be presented.

Discussion of Results

Donor/Recipient Relationships

In general, the descriptions of the different types of donor/recipient relations contained in the questionnaire were successful in directing individuals to respond to the specific purchase contexts. Individuals that described a gift purchase for someone close to them reported knowing the

recipient longer, on average, than individuals who described a gift purchase for a distant other. Recipients described in the close other context were more likely to be individuals in the donor's nuclear family and less likely to be considered acquaintances as compared to recipients in the distant other context.

The only contexts in which there seemed to be any confusion concerning the description of the purchase context was in the self-gift and nonself-gift contexts. The extent to which the product was perceived to be gift to self was rated significant higher for individuals who described a self-gift purchase than for individuals who recounted a purchase for themselves motivated strictly out of need. Yet several individuals in the nonself-gift context assigned a high self-gift rating to their purchases. Similarly, there were a few individuals in the self-gift context who assigned a low self-gift rating to their purchases. Mick and DeMoss (1990a) found that the motivation of need was mentioned by 18% of their respondents when buying a self-gift. However, they asserted that while need was mentioned as a motivation for buying a self-gift, it was also stated by individuals that self-gifts are nonessential. Mick and DeMoss continued by expressing that self-gifts may, at times, be needed, but need is not a sufficient motivation for a purchase to be considered a self-gift. Thus, although the nonself-gift description asked respondents to relate a

purchase made strictly out of need, it is possible that they had additional self-gift motivations for their purchases which were not revealed in their stories.

Mick and DeMoss (1990b) also stated that self-gifts can vary in their degree of specialness, communication to self and others, and exchange value. The variation along these three dimensions may affect the degree to which a product is perceived to be a gift to oneself. Thus, individuals in the self-gift condition who perceived the product to be less of a self-gift may have described a self-gift purchase with which they associated low levels of communication, exchange, and/or specialness.

Focusing on the types of products purchased across the four contexts, it seems that clothes were more prevalent overall. Also, some products were more likely to be purchased depending on the specific purchase context. When individuals were buying a self-gift or a gift to someone close to them, they were more inclined to purchase shoes and jewelry. When individuals were buying a necessity for themselves or a gift for distant friend or relation, they were more likely to buy household items or appliances. These results are consistent with findings reported in prior research on self-gifts and dyadic gift giving (Mick & DeMoss, 1992a; Belk, 1979). Intuitively, these results make sense for individuals obtained gifts for self and close others that were considered more personal and satisfying

such as jewelry, whereas individuals described nonself-gifts and gifts to distant others as more practical and not very unusual such as appliances.

Looking at the types of occasions across the four purchase contexts, it seems that there were no predominant occasions overall. Similar to prior self-gift findings, the most frequent occasions were to be nice to oneself, to celebrate an accomplishment, and to cheer oneself up (Mick & DeMoss, 1990a). This lends further support to the idea that self-gifts are context bound. That is, they tend to be transformed from an ordinary good into a self-gift by the context in which they are acquired. The type of occasions reported for the dyadic gift-giving contexts involved either calendar events that occurred during data collection, such as Mother's Day and Easter, or life stage events such as weddings and graduation (i.e., celebrate accomplishment). Of course, in the nonself-gift context, the most frequent occasions cited were recognition of a new or replacement need.

Information search

As was discussed in the literature review, conflicting evidence has been reported concerning the amount of information search conducted by individuals purchasing a gift for another individual versus purchasing a product for personal use. However, upon further examination of this research, the existence of a confound was detected.

Specifically, past research has failed to distinguish between situations in which individuals purchase a product as a gift for themselves versus situations in which they purchase a product for themselves that is not considered a gift. In this study, these purchase contexts were examined separately to detect differences in the amount of information search. It was found that only nonself-gift purchases motivated by necessity significantly differed from the other purchase contexts on one aspect of information search: the amount of stores visited and salesperson's assistance. (Although it should be noted that the means for the four contexts fell basically into the predicted direction with purchase necessity for self having the highest average amount of information search and self-gift, gift to close other and gift to distant other ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively.) This suggests that individuals buying for themselves out of necessity may have felt more of a need to gather information among stores as compared to individuals in the gift-giving contexts. The fact that there was not a significant difference between the four contexts concerning the number of products or brands considered supports this explanation. Individuals purchasing nonself-gifts did not visit more stores or enlist more salespersons' assistance to consider more purchase alternatives. Instead, they may have done so in order to

gather more information on store policies, such as warranties or pricing.

The inconsistent findings reported by past gift-giving research was also believed to be due to the lack of partial or incomplete descriptions given to subjects concerning the closeness of the relationship between the donor and the recipient. However, the results of this study indicated that the amount of information search was not a function of the donor/recipient relationship. Specifically, donors giving to self or close others did not significantly differ from donors giving to distant others in their information search behavior. Although donors' concern about the gift's ability to communicate its intended message may be greater for gifts to self and close others as compared to distant others, they did not externally search for more information in order to ensure that they purchased the "right" gift for themselves or close others. Instead, individuals may have relied more on an internal information search in order to find a gift that symbolized the intended message for a close other or for self. It was disconcerting to find that time spent making the decision did not differ significantly by purchase context. One might have expected that individuals purchasing nonself-gifts would have spent more time on the decision due to the increase in amount of stores visited and salespersons' assistance. However, after examining the wide variation in the responses to the item

measuring total time spent, it is questionable whether respondents were interpreting this question differently. That is, it is difficult to say whether individuals calculated the time spent on the decision from the point of problem recognition or for example, from the point at which they physically began to search for the product.

Last, the results supported the belief that the amount of information search would not be significantly different for gifts to self as compared to gifts to close others. However, implications of this finding should be interpreted in light of the fact that there was no significant difference in amount of information search among any of the gift-giving contexts.

Price range

As predicted, the results of this study indicated that individuals purchasing gifts for themselves or close others were less likely to have a specific price range in mind as compared to those buying products as a gift for a distant other or as a necessity for themselves. A price range is typically set so that the buyer does not spend too much or too little on a purchase. By setting a price range, individuals who purchased self-gifts or gifts for close others may have felt that it detracted from the specialness and indulgence that the gift symbolized to them. However, giving to distant others tends to be more out of obligation or necessity (Goodman, 1990). In this case, the price range

donors are willing to pay for a gift becomes an important consideration for them. They do not want to spend too little due to the potential social risk involved, yet they do not want to spend too much because it is not as special a purchase to them. Similarly, purchases for oneself motivated strictly by need do not have that quality of specialness or indulgence and boundaries on the price one is willing to pay become a more important issue for the buyer.

Generally, past research has found that individuals buying for personal use studied price more than or equal to individuals buying gifts. By specifying the closeness of the individuals in the gift-giving relationship and further dividing the context of personal use into a self-gift or a nonself-gift situation, the results of this study provide some insight into why these inconsistencies may exist. Specifically, in past research, the personal use context may have been interpreted by more individuals as a nonself-gift context in studies reporting that price was examined more so by these individuals than by individuals in the gift giving contexts. In contrast, studies reporting equal amounts of search concerning the price of the product may have led most individuals to interpret personal use as a self-gift context.

Product qualities

It was predicted that gifts to close others would have more desirable attributes in common with gifts to self than

with gifts to distant others. However, there were only two gift attributes shared by these two contexts that were not shared by the distant other context. These two gift attributes, satisfying and personal, provide evidence of the unique qualities of self-gifts and reveal their link to gifts purchased for close others. These attributes denote the private and fulfilling nature of gifts to self and close others and lend support to the idea that close others are considered part of one's extend self.

Comparing the two dyadic gift-giving context to self-gifts, two attributes were found to be shared by the close and distant other context that were not shared by the self-gift context, being fun and thoughtful. Self-gifts were perceived as being more fun and less thoughtful than the two dyadic gifts. Although all gifts were perceived to be exciting, the quality of fun may have been more applicable to self-gifts because they represent the ultimate self-indulgence and whimsy as compared to buying gifts for others. In addition, individuals may have rated self-gifts as less thoughtful for it may be difficult to perceive oneself as thoughtful of oneself for purchasing a self-gift as compared to being thoughtful of another person when giving him or her a gift.

The majority of differences in applicability of product qualities between the purchase contexts was found when comparing the nonself-gift context to each of the

gift-giving contexts. When contrasting nonself-gifts with both self-gifts and gifts to close others, significant differences were discovered for each of the mean product quality ratings. Self-gifts and gifts to close others were perceived to be less practical and more satisfying, memorable, exciting, fun, thoughtful, unusual, and personal than purchases for self made strictly out of need. In addition, compared to nonself-gifts, gifts to distant others were seen as more memorable, exciting, and thoughtful. These results furnish evidence that gifts are extraordinary purchases and are imbued with added meaning as compared to individuals' everyday purchase decisions. In addition, these results provide overwhelming support for the idea that the inclusion of personal use as a single purchase context should be avoided for it has the potential to be interpreted by individuals in more than one way.

Donor's ideal self-concept

It was predicted that the donor's ideal self-concept would be significantly more correlated with qualities of a self-gift and a close other gift as compared to a purchase made for self out of necessity. Further, it was posited that gifts to distant others would not be correlated with donor's ideal self-concept. However, the self-gift context was the only context that provided marginal evidence of the gift's qualities being related to the donor's ideal self-concept. Thus, across all four purchase contexts, donors'

ideal self-concept was represented only in gifts purchased for themselves. Given that individuals purchased a gift for themselves that they perceived to be very personal and satisfying, it follows that a relationship would exist between their ideal self-concept and the qualities of the gift. It is not clear why a relationship did not exist between the gift's qualities and the donor's ideal self-concept for gifts to close others. It is believed that these results are due, in part, to the questionable accuracy of the scale used to measure ideal self-concept. A more detailed analysis of this point will be presented in the discussion of this study's limitations.

As predicted, there was no correlation between the qualities of a gift for a distant other and the donor's ideal self-concept. However, care should be taken in the conclusions that are drawn from these results for two reasons. One reason concerns the fact that there was not a significant relationship between the gift's qualities and the donor's ideal self-concept in the close other or nonself-gift contexts as well as the distant other context. The other reason deals with the exploratory nature of the analyses. It may have been that all of the aspects of an individual's ideal self-concept were not represented by the six dimensions that were extracted from the Index of Adjustment and Values. Thus, this would explain the lower

correlation between individual's ideal self-concept and the product qualities in the relevant purchase situations.

Perceived Importance of the Occasion

Information search

It was believed that the greater the importance the donor perceived the recipient attached to the purchase situation, the more the donor would search for information across all of the purchase contexts. However, the results indicated that the perceived importance of the occasion affected information search within each of the purchase contexts differentially. As perceived importance increased, donors' search in the distant other and nonself-gift contexts was influenced by an increase in the number of alternatives they considered in their purchase decision. Whereas for close others, donors' information search was affected by a decrease in the amount of stores visited and salesperson's assistance. Information search for self-gifts was relatively unaffected by the donor's perceived importance of the occasion. One might expect that time spent on the purchase decision would be affected according to changes in the amount of information search. There was evidence of this in the close other and distant other contexts. However, as stated in the earlier discussion of information search, the validity of this measure is questionable and should be interpreted with caution.

A possible alternative explanation based on these findings suggests that individuals buying self-gifts or gifts to close others did not externally search for more information when the perceived importance of the occasion increased because they felt this behavior would not increase their likelihood of finding the "right" gift for the occasion. However, information sources such as their own internal knowledge about that person and advice from close friends and relatives may have been sought more so when the perceived importance of the occasion increased in these contexts. Asking for salesperson's assistance and visiting more stores may have added little or nothing to the purchase decision given that these gifts were very personal and price played less of a role in the decision. In fact, when the occasion was perceived to be important to a close other, individuals may have felt that this type of information was an inefficient use of their search time and, thus, explains why they visited less stores and asked for less sales assistance.

In contrast, perceived importance of the occasion did affect the amount of information search concerning the number of products and brands considered for purchases as gifts for distant others and as necessities for self. Individuals purchasing gifts for distant others may have searched for more alternatives when the perceived importance of the occasion increased because they had less knowledge of

the recipient's preferences. Although donors in the distant other context reported the lowest number of products and brands considered, they may have felt that they could best reduce the heightened social risk of buying an inappropriate gift for an important occasion by considering more alternatives.

It was difficult to infer why individual's search for necessities was influenced by the occasion's importance in such a manner. Although they possessed internal knowledge of their preferences, they may have searched for more alternatives because, as they reported, they were seeking the more practical product that was not considered very personal to them as compared to products in the gift-giving contexts.

Price range

Donor's perception of the purchase occasion's importance to the recipient was predicted to increase the price range individuals had in mind before beginning their information search. The results provided evidence that perceived importance increased the width of the price range in only the close other and nonself-gift contexts. The underlying reasons for these results are not clear. It is believed that the different gift occasions within each of the purchase situations may have also influenced the width of the price range. However, this alternative explanation cannot be tested due to the low frequency of incidents

within each of the gift occasions. Further discussion of this limitation is presented in the following section of this chapter.

Limitations

As with most studies, there were a few limitations in this study that should be mentioned. The first limitation deals with the survey instrument. In spite of the fact that certain quality control measures were taken, some respondents did not fill out the critical incident at the beginning of the study. The main purpose of critical incident was to aid respondents' recall of a given purchase situation. Thus, nonresponse of the critical incident may have affected the accuracy of the responses to the structured questions following this section. Individuals who did not write a detailed description of a past purchase before answering the structured questions may have found it more difficult to remember, for example, how many products they considered or how many stores they visited.

The second issue dealing with the survey instrument involves the Index of Adjustment and Values which was used to measure ideal self-concept. This scale has been widely used in various disciplines, yet its assumed property of unidimensionality has never been tested. When a factor analysis was performed in order to reduce the number of items, the scale was found to have 11 factors on which only 28 of the scale items loaded highly. Six of these factors

were used to analyze the relationship between donor's ideal self-concept and applicability of product qualities because only these factors had two or more items loading highly on them. Given the reduction in this scale, it is doubtful whether it measured all aspects of an individual's ideal self-concept. This most likely caused the predicted correlations between the donor's ideal self-concept and the product's qualities within the relevant purchase contexts to be nonsignificant.

The last issue regarding the survey instrument concerns the structured questions which asked respondents about the number of products and brands they considered, the amount of stores and salesperson's assistance, and the time spent on the purchase decision. All of these variables were measured with a single-scale item. Thus, the reliability of the measurement of these variables is not known. However, it was felt that additional survey questions would have increased the nonresponse error given the amount of information to which individuals were already asked to respond.

The second area of the study which presented a potential limitation was the use of a convenience sample. With convenience samples, there is no way of knowing if those individuals included in the sample are representative of the target population. However, with time and monetary constraints, a convenience sample was considered the best

sampling technique to use. A successful attempt was made to include a wide distribution of age and an equal distribution of males and females. However, the most frequently reported household income levels were in the higher income brackets, and most of the respondents resided in a relatively conservative geographic area of the United States. Thus, the generalizability of the results beyond this income and geographic range is questionable.

Last, due to the fact that there was a limited amount of individuals describing purchases for the major gift-giving occasions, comparisons between each of the purchase contexts by these occasions could not be performed. This posed a potential limitation because the gift-giving occasion has been shown to have an effect on the donor's gift-giving behavior (Belk, 1979; DeVere et al., 1975; Mick & DeMoss, 1990a, 1992b; Sherry; 1983). Belk (1979) reported that the cost of the gift appears to be determined more so by the nature of the gift occasion rather than the type of relationship between the donor and the recipient. Past studies have also found that the type of gift qualities sought is influenced by the gift-giving occasion (Belk, 1979; DeVere et al., 1975; Mick & DeMoss, 1992a). It is believed that the inability to compare gift occasions across the purchase contexts caused a reduction in the study's ability to detect differences between these contexts. For example, within the self-gift context, individuals who had a

price range in mind may have had a wider price range when they decided to purchase a self-gift to celebrate an important accomplishment as compared to individuals who decided to purchase a self-gift to celebrate a relatively less important accomplishment. However, the width of the price range may have been unaffected by the importance of the occasion for individuals who reported purchasing a self-gift to be nice to themselves. If this assumption is valid, then, these two effects would have cancelled each other out, and the effect of perceived importance on the width of the price range would be nonsignificant.

Some of these limitations can be addressed through the reconstruction of certain areas of the survey or by changing the method of administering the survey. These future research ideas as well as others are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Future Research

This research has contributed additional knowledge to gift giving by examining several of the antecedent conditions which influence consumers' gift-giving behavior. In addition, this research has contributed to the development of self-gift theory. However, it has also left several questions unanswered and introduced additional ones. Future studies in this area need to be performed in order to advance the understanding of this intriguing and inescapable form of consumer behavior.

Focusing on the current study, future research could incorporate personal interviews instead of a critical incident technique to prompt respondents about a specific past purchase situation as a way to reduce potential recall error. This would ensure that all respondents recalled the purchase situation in some detail before they were asked to respond to specific structured questions concerning the purchase. Personal interviews would also permit the interviewer to probe deeper into the stories that respondents revealed to them. A content analysis of these stories could be performed as a method of examining the various themes among the different gift contexts.

Another method of reducing individual's recall error would be to intercept consumers in a store or mall just after they had made a purchase and ask for their responses to questions pertaining to that purchase. This would also allow more time for additional questions to be asked about the purchase to alleviate the problem concerning single item measures.

Basic research is also needed to compare gift-giving behavior in specific gift occasions between different donor/recipient relationships. For instance, individuals would be asked to recall a past purchase of a gift for a close other's birthday or for their own birthday. This would allow a more indepth understanding of the differences

in consumer's gift giving behavior between the various types of donor/recipient relationships.

As discussed earlier, past research has already provided evidence of significant differences in the types of products purchased between specific gift occasion in both self-gift and dyadic gift giving contexts (Belk 1979, DeVere et al. 1975, Mick & DeMoss 1992a). Differences as well as similarities in amount of information search, the existence of a price range, and the relationship between the product's qualities and the donor's ideal self-concept may also exist between gift occasions across each of the donor/recipient relationships. Yet, no study has compared gift behaviors within specific occasions across these contexts. It is possible that certain gift occasions for self-gifts and gifts for close others evoke similar amounts of information search and share certain product qualities, while other gift occasions within these two donor/recipient relationships involve very dissimilar gift behaviors.

Giving gifts to others as well as oneself is a widespread phenomenon that makes up a significant proportion of consumer's behaviors. The study of self-gifts has only recently begun, and there is still much to explore concerning dyadic gift-giving behavior. Further comprehension of the differences and similarities between self-gifts and dyadic gifts will enhance our appreciation of

the complex links between the donor, recipient, gift, and gift occasion.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRES

Version 1: "Self-Gift Context"

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns how you make different types of purchase decisions in everyday life. You will be asked about selected purchase decisions you have made within the last three months. Please be honest and as accurate as possible. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please answer each question in order, from front to back. There are three sections to this survey. Make sure to read the instructions carefully for each new section.

This study is being conducted for the completion of my doctoral degree at the University of Florida. I want to thank you in advance for your willingness and help in completing this survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Section I

Giving gifts is an important behavior that almost everyone has performed over the course of his or her life. Most of what we have learned about this behavior involves giving gifts to other people such as a husband, girlfriend, or brother. Yet, some people also indicate that they give gifts to themselves as well. These **self-gifts** are special indulgences that are purchased for one's self in specific situations.

On the next few pages there are several questions that concern your own behavior and self-gifts. These questions will require written answers. This is a very important part of the study, so please be as **honest** and **detailed** as possible. Your answers will remain anonymous. Also, please write clearly so that your handwritten responses can be easily read.

Try to recall the last time within the last three months you purchased a product that was under \$100 as a gift for yourself.

In the space below, tell us what the **product** was and the **circumstances** surrounding your purchase of the product. Also, please describe in detail the **steps** you went through to make your purchase selection. Specifically, we would like you to describe what your purchase **thoughts** and **behaviors** were between the time you decided that you were going to purchase a gift and the time you actually purchased one.

When answering the following questions, please relate your answers to the purchase situation you described on the previous page.

- [illegible]

Section II

Below is a list of words that describe qualities of products. Please refer to the purchase situation you described previously and rate how much each word applies to the particular product you purchased for **yourself**.

For example, if you thought the quality "practical" **highly applied** to the product you just described, you would circle 6. If you thought "practical" **did not apply at all**, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme.

	Does Not Apply at All						Applies Very Highly	
Qualities of the Product You Purchased								
Practical	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Satisfying	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Memorable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lasting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Exciting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Fun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Thoughtful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Inexpensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Prestigious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unusual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Personal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
High Quality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Section III

On the next two pages a list of words is presented which describe possible qualities of individuals. We would like you to rate how much each word applies to how you would most **like to be**.

For example, if the quality was "artistic" and you thought artistic was a quality that you would like to be **most of the time**, then you would circle 6. However, if you thought "artistic" **seldom** was what you would like to be, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme. Please be as accurate and honest about your responses as possible. Remember that all of your responses will be kept strictly anonymous.

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

Possible Qualities

Adventurous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appreciative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Artistic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attractive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Broad-minded	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Busy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calm	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clever	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Competitive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Confident	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Considerate	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cruel	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dependable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emotional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Energetic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

**Possible
Qualities**

Fashionable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fault-Finding	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fun-Loving	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Generous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Imaginative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Informal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interesting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kind	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mature	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Merry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Outgoing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Orderly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Poised	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reckless	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sarcastic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Selfish	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stubborn	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Successful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tactful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

**Possible
Qualities**

Thrifty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unconventional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Version 2: "Close Other Context"

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns how you make different types of purchase decisions in everyday life. You will be asked about selected purchase decisions you have made within the last three months. Please be honest and as accurate as possible. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please answer each question in order, from front to back. There are three sections to this survey. Make sure to read the instructions carefully for each new section.

This study is being conducted for the completion of my doctoral degree at the University of Florida. I want to thank you in advance for your willingness and help in completing this survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Section I

Giving gifts is an important behavior that almost everyone has performed over the course of his or her life. Individuals often purchase gifts for other people with whom they feel they have a close, personal relationship.

On the next few pages there are several questions that concern a particular gift purchase you have made for a person with whom you have a close, **personal** relationship. These questions will require written answers. This is a very important part of the study, so please be as **honest** and **detailed** as possible. Your answers will remain anonymous. Also, please write clearly so that your handwritten responses can be easily read.

Try to recall the last time within the last three months you purchased a product that was under \$100 as a gift for a person with whom you have a close, personal relationship.

In the space below, tell us what the **product** was and the **circumstances** surrounding your purchase of the product. Also, please describe in detail the **steps** you went through to make your purchase selection. Specifically, we would like you to describe what your purchase **thoughts** and **behaviors** were between the time you decided that you were going to purchase a gift and the time you actually purchased one.

Section II

Below is a list of words that describe qualities of products. Please refer to the purchase situation you described previously and rate how much each word applies to the particular product you purchased for **yourself**.

For example, if you thought the quality "practical" **highly applied** to the product you just described, you would circle 6. If you thought "practical" **did not apply at all**, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme.

	Does Not Apply at All						Applies Very Highly
Qualities of the Product You Purchased							
Practical	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Satisfying	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Memorable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lasting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exciting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Thoughtful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Inexpensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prestigious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unusual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Personal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
High Quality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

When answering the following questions, please relate your answers to the purchase situation you described on the previous page.

- [illegible]

13. How important do you feel this gift-giving occasion was to you? (circle a number)

[illegible]

14. To what extent was the product that you purchased perceived by you as a gift to yourself? (circle a number)

very much	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	not at all
a gift										a gift

15. What was the approximate date that you purchased the product?

Version 3: "Distant Other Context"

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns how you make different types of purchase decisions in everyday life. You will be asked about selected purchase decisions you have made within the last three months. Please be honest and as accurate as possible. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please answer each question in order, from front to back. There are three sections to this survey. Make sure to read the instructions carefully for each new section.

This study is being conducted for the completion of my doctoral degree at the University of Florida. I want to thank you in advance for your willingness and help in completing this survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Section I

Giving gifts is an important behavior that almost everyone has performed over the course of his or her life. Individuals often purchase gifts for other people with whom they do **not** feel they have a close, personal relationship.

On the next few pages there are several questions that concern a particular gift purchase you have made for a person with whom you do **not** have a close, personal relationship. These questions will require written answers. This is a very important part of the study, so please be as **honest** and **detailed** as possible. Your answers will remain anonymous. Also, please write clearly so that your handwritten responses can be easily read.

Try to recall the last time within the last three months you purchased a product that was under \$100 as a gift for a person with whom you do **not** have a close, personal relationship.

In the space below, tell us what the **product** was and the **circumstances** surrounding your purchase of the product. Also, please describe in detail the **steps** you went through to make your purchase selection. Specifically, we would like you to describe what your purchase **thoughts** and **behaviors** were between the time you decided that you were going to purchase a gift and the time you actually purchased one.

Section II

Below is a list of words that describe qualities of products. Please refer to the purchase situation you described previously and rate how much each word applies to the particular product you purchased for **yourself**.

For example, if you thought the quality "practical" **highly applied** to the product you just described, you would circle 6. If you thought "practical" **did not apply at all**, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme.

	Does Not Apply at All				Applies Very Highly			
Qualities of the Product You Purchased								
Practical	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Satisfying	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Memorable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lasting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Exciting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Fun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Thoughtful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Inexpensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Prestigious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unusual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Personal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
High Quality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Section III

On the next two pages a list of words is presented which describe possible qualities of individuals. We would like you to rate how much each word applies to how you would most **like to be**.

For example, if the quality was "artistic" and you thought artistic was a quality that you would like to be **most of the time**, then you would circle 6. However, if you thought "artistic" **seldom** was what you would like to be, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme. Please be as accurate and honest about your responses as possible. Remember that all of your responses will be kept strictly anonymous.

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

Possible Qualities

Adventurous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appreciative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Artistic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attractive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Broad-minded	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Busy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calm	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clever	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Competitive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Confident	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Considerate	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cruel	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dependable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emotional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Energetic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

**Possible
Qualities**

Fashionable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fault-Finding	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fun-Loving	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Generous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Imaginative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Informal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interesting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kind	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mature	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Merry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Outgoing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Orderly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Poised	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reckless	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sarcastic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Selfish	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stubborn	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Successful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tactful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

**Possible
Qualities**

Thrifty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unconventional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Version 4: "Nonself-Gift Context"

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns how you make different types of purchase decisions in everyday life. You will be asked about selected purchase decisions you have made within the last three months. Please be honest and as accurate as possible. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please answer each question in order, from front to back. There are three sections to this survey. Make sure to read the instructions carefully for each new section.

This study is being conducted for the completion of my doctoral degree at the University of Florida. I want to thank you in advance for your willingness and help in completing this survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Section I

People make many purchase decisions for various reasons over the course of their life. Sometimes people are motivated to buy a product due to its image or because they had a need for the product. For instance, a person may buy a jacket even though he or she already has one mainly because it's perceived to convey a professional image whereas another person may buy a jacket mainly because he or she needs one for winter.

On the next few pages there are several questions that concern a particular purchase decision you have made strictly because you needed the product. These questions will require written answers. This is a very important part of the study, so please be as **honest** and **detailed** as possible. Your answers will remain anonymous. Also, please write clearly so that your handwritten responses can be easily read.

Try to recall the last time within the last three months you purchased a product that was under \$100 strictly because you needed the product. Please focus only on purchases involving durable products that **are** used over an extended period of time and **are not** consumed or worn out quickly.

In the space below, please tell us in one to two paragraphs what the **product** was and the **circumstances** surrounding your purchase of the product. Also, please describe in detail the **steps** you went through to make your purchase selection. Specifically, we would like you to describe what your purchase **thoughts** and **behaviors** were between the time you realized you needed to purchase the product and the time you actually purchased it.

When answering the following questions, please relate your answers to the purchase situation you described on the previous page.

1. Did you consider different **products** when you were deciding on which product to purchase?
_____ yes _____ no (if no, skip to question 3)
2. How many different **products** (total) did you consider?

3. Concerning the specific product you eventually purchased, were different **brands** available for this type of product?
_____ yes _____ no (if no, skip to question 5)
4. How many different **brands** (total) did you consider when you were deciding on which brand to purchase?

5. How many different stores (total) did you visit when you were deciding on which product and brand to purchase? _____
6. How many different salespeople (total) assisted you when you were deciding on which product and brand to purchase? _____
7. How much total time did you spend in deciding on which product and brand to purchase? _____
8. How much did you finally pay for the product?
\$ _____
9. Did you have in mind an approximate price range to be paid for the product before you began searching for the product?
_____yes _____no (if no, skip to question 11)
10. What was the approximate price range to be paid?
between \$ _____ and \$ _____
11. In the past 12 months, how many times have you purchased this particular type of product for yourself or someone else? _____
12. How much knowledge would you say you have in this particular type of product category? (circle a number)

little 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 considerable
knowledge knowledge

Section II

Below is a list of words that describe qualities of products. Please refer to the purchase situation you described previously and rate how much each word applies to the particular product you purchased for **yourself**.

For example, if you thought the quality "practical" **highly applied** to the product you just described, you would circle 6. If you thought "practical" **did not apply at all**, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme.

	Does Not Apply at All						Applies Very Highly	
Qualities of the Product You Purchased								
Practical	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Satisfying	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Memorable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lasting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Exciting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Fun	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Thoughtful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Inexpensive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Prestigious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Unusual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Personal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
High Quality	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Section III

On the next two pages a list of words is presented which describe possible qualities of individuals. We would like you to rate how much each word applies to how you would most **like to be**.

For example, if the quality was "artistic" and you thought artistic was a quality that you would like to be **most of the time**, then you would circle 6. However, if you thought "artistic" **seldom** was what you would like to be, you would circle 0. You could also circle 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 if your opinion was less extreme. Please be as accurate and honest about your responses as possible. Remember that all of your responses will be kept strictly anonymous.

Seldom
would I like
this to be me

Most of the time
I would like this
to be me

Possible Qualities

Adventurous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appreciative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Artistic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attractive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Broad-minded	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Busy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calm	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clever	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Competitive	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Confident	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Considerate	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cruel	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Energetic	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

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**Possible
Qualities**

Fashionable	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fault-Finding	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fun-Loving	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Generous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Imaginative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Informal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interesting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Kind	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mature	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
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**Possible
Qualities**

Thrifty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unconventional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

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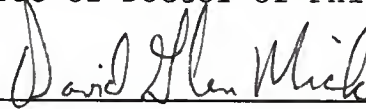
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

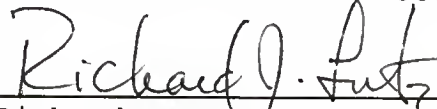
Michelle A. DeMoss has taught at Stetson University in Deland, Florida, as an assistant professor of marketing for 3 years. She currently teaches Consumer Behavior, Marketing Research, and Principles of Marketing at the undergraduate level. Her interests lie in product symbolism and gift-giving behavior. Her Bachelor of Science degree was obtained from the University of Florida in 1986. She is receiving her Ph.D. in Marketing from the College of Business at the University of Florida as well.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



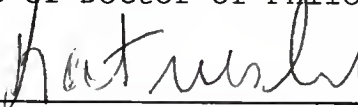
David G. Mick, Chair
Assistant Professor of Marketing

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Richard J. Lutz
Professor of Marketing

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Srinivasan Ratneshwar
Assistant Professor of Marketing


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



David T. Brown
Assistant Professor of Finance,
Insurance, and Real Estate

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Business Administration and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 1993


Dean, Graduate School

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